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- Land Mines:
Seeds of death
across the globe
- The Department of
Humanitarian Affairs
at Work



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The Land-Mine Plague

*by Jan Eliasson
Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs*

The United Nations General Assembly turned its attention recently to the legacy of death from 100 million land mines sown across the globe. Calling for a report by next year on improving international mine-clearing efforts, the Assembly formally recognized the need to assist the estimated 62 countries afflicted by this scourge.

Land mines have turned large areas of the world into a permanent no-man's-land. Most mines lie buried and unmarked, part of a deliberate strategy to terrorize civilians, continuing to kill innocent people long after wars end.

Many of the world's 19 million refugees and 25 million displaced persons are unable to return home for fear of death or dismemberment by these deadly weapons. In Cambodia, people are still dying because of the 4 million mines left after two decades of civil war. In Angola, some of Africa's most fertile fields lie fallow because farmers fear to tread on them. More than 20,000 Angolan amputees - most of them women and children - bear witness to the danger.

Even as the U.N. begins to deal with this menace, mines continue to be planted all over the world. To slow the proliferation, some manufacturing countries have imposed export bans, and the United States is calling for a worldwide export moratorium. But 35 countries continue to manufacture these indiscriminate weapons - many of which are designed to maim rather than kill.

Because removal of land mines has not been a high priority, little research has been done to develop new technology for mine clearance. People must still prod the ground, sometimes assisted by dogs sniffing out the explosives, to locate mines: a slow and dangerous process. In Kuwait, where up to 7 million mines were sown during the Gulf War, 84 demining experts were killed or injured while clearing them. At least 30 people have died in UN demining operations in Afghanistan.

A 1980 UN treaty prohibits the use of land mines against civilians, and directs governments to destroy mines after conflicts end. But only 39 countries have ratified the treaty. Many governments are calling for it to include verification measures and a clause to ensure that mines are built to be detectable and easily removed once a war is over.

Most urgent is the need for development of new mine-clearing technology and local training campaigns to detect and disarm mines. The entire international community must join to bring this plague to an end.

This text first appeared in the New York Times, 22 October 1993.

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The United Nations Approach to Mine Clearance

In "An Agenda for Peace", the Secretary-General noted the impact of land mines on United Nations operations. In addition to their devastating effects on civilian populations, land mines effectively impede the activities of relief workers, peace-makers, peace-keepers and peace-builders working on behalf of the international community.

The approach of the United Nations to mine clearance is that it is fundamentally a humanitarian activity, the performance of which is required at all points along the relief to development continuum. It is a vital element of post-conflict peace-building. In his report to the 1993 session of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General indicated the following framework in which mine-clearance activities should be considered:

"Peace-building begins with practical measures to restore the civil society, reinvigorate its economy, repair the land and restore its productivity, repatriate and resettle displaced people and refugees; it also entails reducing the levels of arms in society, as a component of the volatility that induces violence. These steps, taken in the context of comprehensive humanitarian efforts, are all essential to set the stage for sustainable social, political and economic development."



Photo MSF/J. Vink

Cambodia, Siem Reap, November 1991: Mine victim waiting for surgery.



*Cambodia,
Siem Reap,
November 1991:
Mine victim waiting
for surgery.*

Photo MSF/L. Vink

United Nations landmine programmes are currently in operation or planned for Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Croatia, Iraq, Liberia, Mozambique, Rwanda and Somalia. UN mine-related activities encompass mine-awareness training for affected populations, minefield survey, mine-clearance training and minefield clearance programmes, as well as first-aid training. Although limited mine-clearance activities may be necessary in the context of on-going humanitarian and peace-keeping operations, large-scale demining operations must await the cessation of hostilities.

The United Nations assistance is, as a rule, provided through humanitarian bodies, such as the United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan (UNOCHA), the United Nations Office for Humanitarian Assistance Co-ordination in Mozambique (UNOHAC), the UN Devel-

opment Programme (UNDP) and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). When possible and necessary, joint arrangements with UN peacekeeping operations can be put into place for demining programmes. These joint arrangements have the advantage of making available valuable resources for planning and training in demining programmes, facilitating the meeting of demining priorities in connection with the peacekeeping mandate, as well as ensuring that there will be an appropriate carry-over presence and transition of priorities once the peacekeeping operation has completed its mandate.

Like other humanitarian activities, the United Nations only undertakes mine clearance on the basis of consent. One of the first tasks of United Nations involvement in a country is to determine the nature and extent of the landmine problem. Early warning of

the existence of a landmine problem is often provided by grim statistics of death and injury resulting from accidental landmine detonation.

Although mapping of minefields is required by international law, it is rarely accurate, if it is done at all. The mapping of mines distributed by aircraft is almost impossible. Even when there is knowledge of the original locations, climatic conditions (such as floods or snow drifts) can cause mines to move. Over time, the number of persons aware of the locations of mines may decrease, and any informal records may be lost or destroyed.

In addition to the general lack of minefield maps, obstacles to successful mine clearance include the fact that mines may continue to be laid even when organized removal efforts are underway, or that access to known minefields may continue to be restricted and information withheld

by the parties concerned. Even when non-co-operation is not an issue, the multitude of types of mines, as well as vast variations in terrain and climate, complicate questions regarding appropriate methodology and equipment for removal.

Once the mined areas have been located and identified, mine awareness education plans and mine clearance plans are formulated, including assessments of financial implications. Mine clearance criteria and priorities are considered in this context, to ensure, for example, response to the need to open and/or establish vital infrastructure as quickly as possible or to the need to re-establish the main revenue-earning capabilities of the country. Mine clearance operation objectives typically include the opening of routes for peacekeeping operational purposes, the movement of relief aid, the transit of refugees, the clearance of village areas to allow resettlement and/or the resumption of community life, and the clearance of essential agricultural land, pastoral areas or fuelbearing woodland, to rebuild the rural economy.

United Nations experience has shown that the most cost-effective clearance teams are those utilizing as much national involvement as possible, to ease communication with the local population and to increase trust and confidence in the programme. The objective of training programmes is to create an in-country mine clearance capacity, including for programme supervision and management. Under such programmes, civilian mine clearers are recruited locally and trained for the task in their own country, under the supervision and guidance of United Nations mine clearance staff or, if necessary, contracted expatriate supervisors and

instructors. As mine clearance is a time-consuming process, these programmes have the advantage of enhancing the smooth and progressive transition of responsibility and control over demining activities to the country concerned.

The nature of the landmine problem demands complete transparency of information in order to obviate unnecessary accidents. In addition to close collaboration with local authorities and close co-operation among members of the UN family, there must be co-ordination with NGOs working in the area, who may have organized mine-related programmes of their own. Such information-sharing and co-operation is

also desirable for non-UN mine clearance operations. In the absence of UN humanitarian or peacekeeping operations, mine clearance assistance could be provided to governments as part of technical assistance programmes. In Cambodia, for example, in the wake of UNTAC, technical support and capacity building of national mine clearance efforts are being undertaken by UNDP, in close consultation with the Cambodian Government and donor States.

Minimum standards of conduct are established for all mine clearance programmes organized and funded by the UN, making maximum use of the data available on clearance methods, equipment, performance and costs.



Photo M. Vercruyse

For this purpose, the United Nations has been tracking and analyzing information obtained principally through current United Nations operations, including mine systems encountered, methods and rates of clearance, casualty rates, rosters of trained personnel, effectiveness of contractors, and costs. This enables the more complete and accurate assessment of the feasibility of mine-clearing, and ultimately enhances efficiency and effectiveness. It also allows the United Nations to set realistic standards for training, supervision, medical cover and equipment in all of its mine clearance activities.

Insufficient funding for demining operations has been a major impediment to United Nations' efforts to date. Demining often has to start ahead of other elements of a United Nations operation, but it frequently remains a low priority for budget allocations. Mine clearance equipment, vehicles and communications facilities, at the least, must be in place before mine-clearance training can begin, because much of that training has to be done in live minefields. Mine clearance programmes, therefore, require large amounts of money early, to set up the necessary structures and to purchase equipment. It is the policy of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs

to include mine programme requirements in all consolidated appeals for humanitarian assistance to countries with landmine problems. In addition, the Department works closely with other parts of the UN organization to ensure that adequate funding for mine activities can be made available through the appropriate channels.

At present, little research and development is taking place on mechanical equipment for mine clearance. The majority of mine detection and clearance equipment in use today is derived from 1940s technology, and is usually incapable of producing the level of clearance (99% or more) needed for human habitation after clearance. Even current electronic mine detectors still rely on the small amounts of residual metal in mines for their detection. The problem of non-metallic mines has not yet been solved. The need to develop new and cost-effective mine detection systems is acute. By raising public awareness of the nature and extent of the mine problem worldwide, the UN hopes to encourage research and development of new technology and equipment.

Consideration of Landmines at the 1993 Session of the General Assembly

At the initiative of the European Community, the General Assembly inscribed a new item on its agenda entitled, "Assistance in Mine Clearance". This marked the first time that the international community has considered the global landmine problem as a distinct issue.

In the debate on the item on 19 October 1993, the humanitarian nature of the mine problem was stressed, and



*Cambodia,
Siem Reap,
Monique Pont
nurse-
anaesthetologist.*

Photo MSF/J. Vink

the Secretary-General's co-ordinated approach to the provision of assistance was welcomed. The indiscriminate and inhumane nature of landmines was repeatedly mentioned, with gruesome statistics cited on the devastation landmines wreak on innocent and vulnerable populations. The enduring nature of the landmine problem was also raised, especially in connection with the disruption caused by resettlement, rehabilitation, reconstruction and other efforts to restore normalcy. In this connection, representatives of some mine-polluted countries pointed out the severity of the difficulties faced in a post-conflict situation, particularly with regard to the lack of skills and resources to address the problem. They urged greater support for international mine clearance assistance efforts.

While some participants in the debate believed that primary responsibility for mine clearance should rest with the mine-affected country, others stressed the overall humanitarian responsibilities of the international community. Some speakers also felt that greater financial responsibility for global mine clearance should be borne by those who profited from landmine production and trade. The need for greater international attention to the development of new mine clearance technologies was also mentioned. Many speakers urged the strengthening of the legal regime governing landmine use, while others welcomed efforts toward a global moratorium on landmines.

At the close of the debate, General Assembly resolution 48/7, (*See double inserted page*) which had been co-sponsored by 88 Member States, was adopted by consensus. The resolution calls for strengthening the co-ordi-

*Post-surgery
rehabilitation by
Dr. P. Depuydt,
Cambodia,
Siem Reap.*

Photo MSF/J. Vink



nation of mine clearance assistance and requests the Secretary-General to provide a comprehensive report on all aspects of the problem and the Organization's approach to it, including with respect to the feasibility of establishing a voluntary trust fund for demining. This report will be considered by the Assembly next year.

In connection with its consideration of the question of disarmament, the General Assembly adopted two resolutions related to landmines. The first, resolution 48/75K, seeks to impose a global moratorium on the export of landmines. It was put forward at the initiative of the United States and was adopted by consensus. (*See page 29*).

The second resolution pertains to the 1980 United Nations Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (the Inhumane Weapons Convention), which has a Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby Traps and Other Devices. The Convention entered into force in 1983, and, in accordance with its terms, is eligible for review ten years later. The General Assembly adopted (by a vote of 162 in favour, none against and 3 abstentions) resolution 48/79 welcoming efforts to organize a review conference and urging greater adherence to the convention. ■

The Scourge of Land Mines

Peace has returned to Cambodia after 12 years of war, but Cambodians are still dying or getting their arms and legs blown off at the rate of 200 to 300 a month by some 4 million land mines left behind on the killing fields. United Nations experts say this macabre scenario is being repeated from Afghanistan to Angola, as tens of thousands of civilians are killed or mutilated by the estimated 85 to 100 million mines scattered like seeds of death across the globe. Even as the UN takes up a major new effort to deal with this menace, thousands more mines are being planted - in the former Yugoslavia alone, at a rate of several thousand a week.

An incident last April in Angola graphically illustrates the terrifying randomness of mines. A World Food Programme relief plane flying over Angola was hit by rebel fire, but its Russian pilot managed, with extraordinary skill and considerable luck, to land the plane. The crew got out of the plane, but stepped right onto a mine, leaving the flight engineer dead and the pilot severely injured.

While much publicity has been given to nuclear and chemical weapons, less attention has been paid to these cheap, low-tech, easily available and deadly armaments.

"Mines are fighters that never miss, strike blindly, do not carry weapons openly and go on fighting long after hostilities are ended"; they are the

by Susan Ruel

UN tackles hidden peacetime killers

*"Of all the tasks
involved
in setting a nation on a
new road to peace and
prosperity, perhaps none
has the immediate urgency
of mine clearance ...
No attempt to restore a
sense of community and
security can succeed
without effective
land-mine removal."*

United Nations Secretary-General
Boutros Boutros-Ghali. *Report on the Work
of the Organization, September 1993.*

"greatest violators of international humanitarian law, practising blind terrorism", according to a delegate at an International Committee of the Red Cross symposium on mines held in Montreux, Switzerland in April 1993.

"They are blind weapons that cannot distinguish between the footfall of a soldier or that of an old woman gathering firewood", according to the 1991 report *Land Mines in Cambodia: The Coward's War*, published by Asia Watch and Physicians for Human Rights.

Human rights groups warn that the problem is worsening, despite a 1980 international treaty restricting the use of land mines. Some 35 countries manufacture and export land mines; the leaders are China, Italy, and the Russian Federation. One device can cost as little as US \$1. Cheap and easy to use, they are the weapons of choice in many poor countries.

Cambodia's 12-year civil war may have been the first in history in which more people were killed by mines than by any other armament. Today, with one mine for every two inhabitants, Cambodia is thought to have the world's highest percentage of disabled people: one out of 236 Cambodians is an amputee, compared with 1 per 22,000 in the US. And the toll keeps mounting; in the words of a US prosthetist, "Cambodia is being demined an arm and a leg at a time" ...

.... Afghanistan, Mozambique and

... Seeds of death across the globe.

Somalia also rank high on this tragic roster, as well as Angola - where most of the 20,000 amputees are women and children. Land mines are present in an estimated 62 countries, among them Armenia, Azerbaijan, Colombia, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Laos, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Peru, Rwanda, Sudan, Uganda, Vietnam and the former Yugoslavia. Due to land-mine pollution, vast areas of the globe have become permanent no-go areas. Australia and Antarctica are perhaps the only continents free of minefields.

In addition to endangering human life, land mines disrupt transportation and agriculture, despoil the environment and obstruct relief efforts and the resettlement of refugees. "Relief assistance, repatriation and rehabilitation will continue to be seriously hampered unless de-mining is vigorously pursued", says Jan Eliasson, the UN Under-Secretary-General of Humanitarian Affairs.

In Somalia, a representative of *Médecins Sans Frontières* said returning refugees were so fearful of entering their mine-filled houses that they continued living in tents. In northern Iraq, whole villages have been surrounded by mine-fields, making them impossible to reenter. In Angola, some of Africa's most arable land goes untillied, contributing to widespread malnutrition, because farmers fear death or dismemberment by mines. ...

... State-of-the-art mines are designed to maim but not kill, and surgeons find that the "lethal radius" of a mine encompasses one or both legs, the genitals, arms, chest and face. "Butterfly mines" - one of 20 varieties

manufactured in eight nations, and dropped from the air over Afghanistan - are designed to look innocuous: they have been a particularly pernicious source of injury to children who pick them up to play with.

About half of those struck by mines never make it to a clinic or hospital. Those who do find that the surgery needed is so complex that few surgeons are trained to perform it, or that the medical facilities available are inadequate. In Somalia in 1991, two women, one Somali and the other a

Cheap and easy to use, they are the weapons of choice in many poor countries.

Dutch refugee worker, had their legs torn off by land mines, only to find that aspirin was the only painkiller available once they reached the only hospital in the area, according to a report in *The Independent*.

This year, for the first time, the question of assistance in mine clearance is being addressed by the UN General Assembly, in an effort to help affected countries and address the urgent need for new techniques to defuse mines on a large scale.

Estimated number of land mines Most affected countries and territories

Afghanistan	9-10	million
Angola	9	million
Iraq	5-10	million
Kuwait	5	million
Cambodia	4-7	million
Western Sahara	1-2	million
Mozambique	1-2	million
Somalia	1	million
Bosnia & Herzegovina	1	million
Croatia	1	million

(Source: United Nations and United States Department of State)

At present, the most effective method of de-mining involves a process that combines the use of human beings, machines and dogs. The first problem in mine clearance is the detection of the mines, which may be buried as much as one metre below ground level. Electronic devices are used to detect the small amounts of metal in mines, usually in conjunction with a method known as "prodding", where a probe is gently inserted into the ground at an angle, until it just touches the mine. Detection by electronic means and by prodder is painstakingly slow and expensive, yet it offers a much higher rate of accuracy than other methods. Dogs detect mines by the smell of the explosive in them. When well-trained, they are very effective. ...

... The United Nations is already actively involved in de-mining programmes. In 1988, with the advent of the UN Co-ordination Office for Assistance to Afghanistan, the UN was for the first time given a mandate to clear mines. Now, United Nations teams are at work in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Mozambique and the former Yugoslavia, and are training local people in clearance techniques. The UN also organizes training programmes for those living in mined areas, especially returning refugees and displaced persons.

"Plans are under way to institute similar programmes in Liberia, Rwanda and Somalia", says Kofi Annan, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Peace-Keeping Operations. "Mine clearing is very much part of current UN operations, both peace-keeping and humanitarian. We are only now beginning to discover just how vital mine clearance is to every facet of UN operations"...

At the UN Cambodian Mine Action Centre, it takes a team of 20 trained workers a week to clear a piece of jungle the size of two football fields...

Before the century is over ...

The gravity and cruelty of the threat posed by land mines cannot be overemphasized. Tens of millions of mines ... remain scattered around in former combat zones, taking and jeopardizing innumerable lives and impeding the restoration of normalcy. Experts estimate that it could take 40 to 50 years to get rid of these mines. The international community should take it upon itself to end this fatal scourge - this delayed form of warfare - before the century is over.

Jan Eliasson, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs

...United Nations experience in Afghanistan and Cambodia shows that the most effective clearance teams are those involving the local people as much as possible, to ease communication and to increase trust and confidence in the programmes. In such schemes, teams of mine clearers are recruited locally and trained in their own country, under the guidance of United Nations mine clearance experts. But the magnitude of the task, its complexity and cost require greater funding and attention from the international community: for instance, the ongoing de-mining programme in Afghanistan has had to cease periodically, and teams have had to be laid off for lack of funds.

In 1980, the UN concluded the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, and a related Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby Traps and Other Devices. These instruments entered into force in December 1983, barring the use of land mines against civilians, forbidding the distribution of "remotely delivered" mines planted by plane unless records are kept on where mines are sown, requiring record-keeping of all mine placement and urging a commitment to destroy them once the conflict ends. But only 36 nations have ratified these treaties.

The International Committee of the Red Cross and a number of other

international organizations and NGOs are calling for the strengthening of the United Nations treaty on land mines. Among their proposals are the inclusion in the treaty of a verification mechanism; extension of the ban to include the internal, ethnic conflicts now prevalent in the post-cold war period; and a clause to ensure that land mines are manufactured to be detectable and endowed with a self-destructive capacity once hostilities cease. At present, most of the mines being manufactured have no expiration date. An increasing number are made of plastic or wood, making them difficult to detect.

Some countries are taking action. The United States, not yet a party to the Convention and Protocol, passed in October 1992 a one-year moratorium on the manufacture and export of land mines, even though U.S. production is minuscule. The United States has passed a three-year extension to this moratorium. France also recently announced an export ban.

The European Parliament has called for a five-year export moratorium, and it was the European Com-

munity which introduced the question of mine clearance in the agenda of the UN General Assembly. The General Assembly has called on all States to implement a moratorium on the exports of land mines.

The UN de-mining expert, Patrick Blagden, says a Herculean task lies ahead: the slow, labour-intensive process of defusing millions of mines worldwide (at an approximate cost, using current methods, of US \$1,000 each), stricter enforcement of the terms of the treaty and the eventual ban of all manufacture and use.

Mr. Blagden stresses the need to communicate the horrors of land-mine proliferation to the world community: "Until there is complete public rejection of the use of anti-personnel mines, just as there is for chemical and nuclear weapons, the ban won't get very far."

The end of the cold war provides an opportunity to curb the spread of this scourge and to uproot the millions of land mines infesting many former war zones. But even as UN experts and the international community look at new ways to deal with this scourge, tens of thousands of mines are being laid in war-torn regions, and another 100 million are stock-piled around the world. Only a much more determined international action can counter what Mr. Eliasson calls "an affront to the international conscience". ■

"Relief assistance, repatriation and rehabilitation will continue to be seriously hampered unless de-mining is vigorously pursued"

Abbreviated version of an article published in "UN Focus", October 93, UN DPI - N.Y.

Les enfants premières victimes des mines anti- personnel

*Samir S. Basta, Directeur,
et Françoise Jaffré,
Bureau de l'UNICEF
pour l'Europe à Genève*

L'UNICEF, qui s'est donné pour devoir d'aider et de protéger les enfants du monde, a décidé de sensibiliser l'opinion publique afin que cesse le carnage provoqué par l'utilisation croissante et indiscriminée des mines anti-personnel, dont trop souvent les premières victimes ne sont pas des combattants mais des civils, des femmes et des enfants.

Selon nos estimations, plus d'un million et demi d'enfants ont été tués ces dix dernières années et plus de quatre millions sont handicapés de guerre. Nombre d'entre eux ont été victimes de ces mines anti-personnel posées par milliers dans les champs, autour des points d'eau et sur les chemins. Les mines sont en effet devenues lors des dernières guerres des armes psychologiques utilisées

contre la population civile pour semer la terreur et la souffrance, empêcher l'accès à la nourriture, le retour au foyer et isoler les communautés. Au début des années 60, apparurent les mines dispersibles, que l'on peut larguer par avion ou délivrer par mortier et artillerie, les "dents de dragon" américaines utilisées au Vietnam, pesant 20 grammes et arrachant un pied si l'on marchait



Photo UNICEF/J. Isaac

*Ce père Afghan aide son enfant à apprendre à se tenir sur ses béquilles.
(Hôpital du Comité International de la Croix Rouge, Kaboul.)*



Photo UNICEF/Mainichi/Shinichi Asabe

Si on l'avait soignée plus tôt, Sei Tho, n'aurait pas perdu son bras. Elle n'est qu'une enfant parmi les millions d'autres que la guerre a mutilés. (Cambodge).

dessus, préfigurant l'un des types les plus dangereux pour les enfants, la mine soviétique "papillon" conçue pour être jetée par milliers depuis des avions ou des hélicoptères, pour tomber en tourbillonnant et se poser doucement sur le sol sans exploser. Ce dernier type de mine a été largement utilisé en Afghanistan où de nombreux enfants en ont été les victimes. L'aspect inoffensif de ces mines de petite taille, en plastique coloré, que l'on peut facilement prendre pour des jouets, les rend encore plus dangereuses pour les enfants, curieux par nature.

Il y a actuellement environ 100 millions de mines répandues à travers le monde, et tous les jours il s'en pose de nouvelles: en ex-Yougoslavie, en Somalie et dans toutes les zones de conflits. Elles restent dangereuses longtemps après la fin des hostilités et

Cambodge

Un médecin dans un hôpital au Cambodge rapporte le cas d'un petit garçon devenu paraplégique après avoir marché sur une mine: "Au début, la famille ne savait que faire. Alors, elle l'a abandonné à l'hôpital parce qu'elle ne pouvait plus rien attendre de lui. Il y est resté seul, quatre mois, avant qu'elle ne revienne le reprendre. Mais nous, nous savions seulement qu'elle l'avait abandonné. Rien ne prouvait qu'elle reviendrait un jour et ils ne le savaient probablement pas eux-mêmes..."

Interview rapportée dans La Guerre des Lâches, Les mines au Cambodge, Asia Watch/Physicians for Human Rights, 1992.

quelquefois, ironie du sort, tuent ceux-là même qui les ont posées. Elles sont la principale cause de décès et de blessure en Afghanistan, en Angola, au Cambodge et en Somalie et elles continuent à exercer leurs ravages entre autre en El Salvador, au Mozambique, au Nicaragua et au Vietnam. On estime à 100 000 le nombre d'enfants afghans amputés à la suite de l'explosion d'une mine, et une étude a établi qu'au nord de la Somalie 76% des blessés par mines sont des enfants de moins de 15 ans. Selon le CICR, rien qu'en Afghanistan et au Cambodge, 23% de tous les blessés sont des enfants et aujourd'hui, en ex-Yougoslavie, deux enfants au moins sont admis chaque jour dans les hôpitaux avec de graves blessures dues à l'explosion d'une mine. Les enfants sont plus vulnérables que les adultes

Kurdistan irakien

Le 5 juin 1992, dans la région de Choman, Pershung Abdel Kader, âgée de 40 ans et ses quatre enfants ramassaient du bois dans la montagne. L'un des enfants a déclenché une mine bondissante. Deux enfants de sept et neuf ans sont arrivés morts à l'hôpital de campagne de Choman avec d'énormes plaies à la tête. En route pour l'hôpital, leur mère est décédée des suites d'une éviscération abdominale, de blessures au visage et d'une amputation traumatique de la main droite. Son fils âgé de 6 ans a été grièvement blessé au visage et a perdu les deux yeux. Le petit frère de 4 ans a subi une amputation chirurgicale des deux jambes à l'hôpital de Choman. La guerre des lâches, Les mines anti-personnel au Kurdistan irakien, Middle East Watch, 1993.

aux effets des mines: leur corps plus petit protège moins leurs organes vitaux, les risques sont plus élevés en cas d'hémorragie et ils sont donc plus souvent mortellement blessés que les adultes. D'autre part, leur rôle au sein de la communauté est souvent d'aller chercher du bois ou d'emmener paître les animaux, ce qui les expose davantage au risque de traverser des zones minées. S'ils marchent sur une mine, les enfants seront blessés aux jambes et à l'abdomen. S'ils la prennent, ils risquent de perdre leur main et seront touchés au visage, en particulier aux yeux. Les mines, qui souvent sont fabriquées pour blesser et non pour tuer, infligent des blessures terribles qui exigent souvent l'amputation. Les enfants handicapés deviendront dans le pire des cas une charge pour leur famille et leur société, sans espoir aucun de fonder une famille un jour ou de pouvoir acquérir un revenu. Ils seront un fardeau supplémentaire pour une famille et une société déjà affaiblies et appauvries par un conflit.



Photo UNICEF/I. Isaac

Cette jeune fille, qui a perdu une jambe lors de l'explosion d'une mine, apprend à se servir de béquilles dans un hôpital de la Croix Rouge à Kaboul. (L'UNICEF fournit une aide pour les prothèses et soins orthopédiques pour les enfants et les femmes).

Les plus chanceux seront soignés convenablement et, munis d'une prothèse adaptée, ils pourront après une réhabilitation fonctionnelle, reprendre une vie presque normale, aller à l'école, jouer comme les autres enfants et travailler. Mais les prothèses des enfants doivent être changées tous les six mois... L'UNICEF estime que, par exemple, en Angola et au Mozambique, seulement 10 ou 20 pour cent des enfants handicapés recevront une prothèse, même sommaire. La plupart d'entre eux ne recevront qu'une paire de béquilles et se débrouilleront comme ils le pourront. Au Cambodge où l'UNICEF collabore avec une ONG qui appareille les amputés, chaque prothèse coûte environ \$100. L'UNICEF rembourse les frais de transport jusqu'à Phnom Penh des femmes et des enfants qui viennent se faire soigner, leur donne un peu d'argent pour se nourrir et les loge pendant leur traitement.

Les enfants sont souvent victimes de leur

curiosité et de leur insouciance, et il est de première importance de les éduquer et de les rendre conscients des dangers. L'UNICEF a lancé des campagnes d'information, en particulier en ex-Yougoslavie où selon des sources gouvernementales, environ 450 000 mines ont déjà été trouvées sur des sites civils de Croatie et où l'on estime qu'il y a trois millions de mines représentant un grand danger pour les enfants. L'UNICEF a financé l'impression de 80 000 brochures, 5 000 posters et 500 livres destinés à être utilisés par les enseignants pour expliquer aux enfants les risques encourus. Un manuel a également été publié afin d'aider les volontaires et les spécialistes du déminage. La télévision et la radio croates ont diffusé des programmes spéciaux destinés aux enfants et à leurs parents. De façon similaire, l'UNICEF a pris l'initiative d'une campagne d'information en El Salvador, après avoir appris que 75% des blessés et tués par mines étaient des enfants (dans ce pays, la guerre a laissé plus de 300 000 enfants et adolescents handicapés). En collaboration avec le gouvernement, l'UNICEF a obtenu que les zones

minées soient balisées et a informé le public par le biais de messages radio, de spots à la télévision, de brochures distribuées dans les écoles. Il a également sensibilisé les éducateurs, les travailleurs sociaux et les chefs des communautés rurales.

Cependant s'il est important d'informer, de procéder à des opérations de déminage, de soigner, d'opérer, et d'assurer aux blessés une rééducation fonctionnelle et un appareillage adapté, il est encore plus important d'agir afin que cesse ce que certains appellent la "guerre des laches". Des instruments légaux existent, ratifiés par de nombreux pays, qui imposent de protéger la population civile et tout particulièrement les enfants (la Convention relative aux droits de l'enfant, par exemple, stipule que "les Etats parties s'engagent à respecter et à faire respecter les règles du droit humanitaire international qui leur sont applicables en cas de conflit armé et dont la protection s'étend aux enfants" et l'article 39 "les Etats parties prennent toutes les mesures appropriées pour faciliter la réadaptation physique et psychologique et

El Salvador, 6 avril 1992

Trois enfants sont morts près du volcan Guazapa le week-end dernier après avoir marché sur une mine posée lors de la guerre civile. Ironie du sort, leurs parents venaient de retourner dans cette zone quelques jours auparavant. Les trois enfants étaient âgés respectivement de quatre, six et dix ans. Des fragments de leurs corps ont été retrouvés à 30 mètres du lieu de l'explosion.

(Le projet d'information sur les mines en El Salvador, UNICEF/PAM, 1993)

la réinsertion sociale de tout enfant victime de conflit armé). Le protocole II de la Convention de 1980 des Nations Unies régit l'emploi des mines et, si ses dispositions étaient étendues et respectées, pourrait protéger de nombreuses vies. Il appartient aux états producteurs, qui d'un autre côté, contribuent au financement des organismes en charge des actions humanitaires, de prendre les mesures nécessaires afin que cesse l'emploi de ces armes dont l'utilisation indiscriminée entraîne des conséquences humaines, environnementales et socio-économiques dramatiques et inacceptables. Si, malheureusement, nous ne pouvons empêcher les guerres et les conflits, nous pouvons, comme nous l'avons fait pour les armes biologiques, agir pour que l'usage des mines anti-personnel soit interdit au niveau international. La Belgique, les Etats Unis et la France ont déjà montré l'exemple en proclamant un moratoire sur l'exportation des mines anti-personnelles. L'UNICEF qui a lancé le concept des "enfants en tant que zones de paix" ne peut rester indifférent. ■

Cambodge

La dernière chose dont se souvient Oung Yi, 17 ans, avant que tout ne devienne noir, est le paysage familier des rizières de chaque côté de la route qui mène de sa maison à la frontière laotienne. Ce qu'elle sait ensuite, c'est que deux jours après elle était à l'hôpital. La moitié inférieure de sa jambe droite avait disparu. Elle avait marché sur l'une des centaines de milliers de mines enterrées qui sont l'héritage le plus durable de la guerre qui a ravagé le Cambodge pendant plus de 25 ans.

Pour une jeune femme du Cambodge rural, la perte d'un membre n'est pas seulement douloureuse, c'est aussi une catastrophe sociale. Ses chances de mariage peuvent être réduites à néant, et elle se retrouve inutile dans la ferme familiale où chaque main est indispensable. Oung Yi avait tellement honte de sa blessure qu'elle est restée enfermée dans la maison de ses parents pendant trois ans, ne s'aventurant au-dehors que pour se baigner en toute hâte dans la rivière. ...

UNICEF features 93, Bordewich.

Legal and Medical Aspects of the Use of Anti-Personnel Mines

by the International Committee of the Red Cross

Every year, thousands of men, women and children are victims of anti-personnel mines. The use of these often extremely pernicious weapons has resulted in a tragedy that is all the more acute in humanitarian terms as, apart from the appalling number of victims they cause, anti-personnel mines not only kill but mutilate horrendously, strike blindly at all human beings alike, and continue to spread terror for years or even decades after the hostilities have ended. Moreover, massive and indiscriminate sowing of mines renders whole regions useless for human habitation and activity, thereby resulting in substantial population movements and consequent economic destabilisation in other neighbouring regions. As a method of warfare, such weapons are not in conformity with certain fundamental rules of international humanitarian law governing the conduct of hostilities, which call upon parties to distinguish between civilians and combatants, prohibit attacks against the former and, therefore, also the use of indiscriminate weapons, and do not permit the use of such weapons as are liable to cause excessive suffering.



Photo ICRC

Legal Aspects

In the context of its internationally-recognized mandate to work for the application and development of international humanitarian law, the ICRC, concerned by the need to deal more effectively with certain weapons abuses, organized two important symposia of government experts at Lucern in 1974 and Lugano in 1976. These meetings provided valuable support for the United Nations Conference that followed in 1979-80 and which adopted what has come to be known as the 1980 United Nations Weapons Convention.

More recently, the magnitude of the suffering caused by anti-personnel landmines as witnessed by its delegates in the field pushed the ICRC into organizing the Symposium on Anti-Personnel Mines in Montreux (21-23 April, 1993). The general objective of this Symposium was to collect the necessary facts and ideas to co-ordinate future action by bodies that are interested in improving the fate of mine victims and in undertaking preventive action. A complete report has been published and sent to all governments.

Both the general legal expertise and operational experience of the ICRC in this field, as well as the discussions and conclusions of the Montreux Symposium, point out to a number of lacunae in the legal domain, as well as steps that ought to be undertaken to co-ordinate action in order to improve, universally, the fate of mine victims.

With regard to law, the 1980 United Nations Convention contains three Protocols, of which the second deals with prohibitions or restrictions on the use of mines. However, a crucial issue regarding the implementation of the

Convention as a whole, and which is yet to be resolved, is the fact that the Convention at present formally applies only to international armed conflicts although the majority of conflicts are internal. For example, we are witnessing, in addition to the tremendous immediate suffering caused by the laying of millions of mines during internal armed conflicts, the massive social and economic damage that many countries are undergoing as a result.

Another aspect of importance for an effective treaty is the means of implementation that it provides, but

this is noticeably lacking in the present Convention. Examples could be drawn from Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, which contains means such as provision of legal advisers, training in humanitarian law and criminal sanctions.

With regard to the 1980 United Nations Convention's second Protocol relating to mines, there is an urgent need for looking into the military effectiveness of anti-personnel mines, evaluating whether they are indispensable, and looking for alternative solutions. Towards this end, the ICRC



Mine clearance training

Photo Operation SALAM/J. Mohr



Photo ICRC

has decided to convene a meeting of military experts in January 1994.

The 1980 Convention is a humanitarian law treaty in that it regulates or prohibits the use of weapons, not the trade in or ownership of them. However, the two subjects are closely linked, for if the use of certain weapons needs to be restricted or prohibited because of their unacceptably cruel or indiscriminate effects, States need to also consider prohibiting the manufacture and export of these weapons. The ICRC hopes that States that have not yet done so will ratify or accede to this treaty as quickly as possible, as to date only 39 States are party to the treaty. A wider participation in the treaty should help ensure that the discussions and results of the forthcoming review conference are as effective as possible. The ICRC equally hopes that States will take the opportunity of the forthcoming review conference of the 1980 Convention to work towards the most

effective solutions in the spirit of the aim of international humanitarian law, namely, to alleviate as far as possible, the suffering caused by armed conflict.

Medical Implications of Anti-personnel mines

▼ *Pattern of injury*

There are three patterns of injury seen in those victims who survive long enough to reach the hospital. The first relates to standing on a buried anti-personnel mine; there is usually traumatic amputation of the foot or leg with severe injury of the other leg, genitalia and arms. This first pattern tends to be the most severe. The second pattern is seen when the victim triggers a fragment mine. If he is not killed immediately, he has wounds as seen

from any other fragmentation device; such wounds can affect any part of the body. The third relates to accidental detonation whilst handling a mine; it is seen among de-miners, those planting mines or curious children who pick up or play with mines. This pattern inevitably inflicts severe wounds on the hands and face.

Some mines, by design, kill the person who triggers them; this is the case for the bounding mines which explode at waist height.

The proportion of wounded who die or who suffer amputation depends on the variety of mine in the location.

▼ *Evacuation of the wounded*

Those injured by anti-personnel mines may be far from a hospital; first aid and rapid evacuation by ambulance is needed for the victim to benefit from surgery. The earlier the patient

receives intravenous fluids, antibiotics and surgery, the better. In most countries affected by mines, the transportation time to hospital may be days or even weeks and even then, only for those who can afford it.

Only about 15 per cent of the patients admitted to ICRC hospitals because of mine injury are admitted within six hours of injury.

▼ *Surgical treatment*

In the last ten years the hospitals of the ICRC have treated about 12,000 mine injured patients. This represents a very small number compared with the total from the conflicts concerned.

The surgery required to treat severe limb wounds effectively is difficult and many surgeons are unprepared or untrained for this kind of work when they first encounter mine injured patients. The central role of the surgeon is to remove all dead and contaminated tissue; this can be a difficult and time consuming operation. Recently, the Medical Division of the ICRC has developed surgical amputation techniques that are appropriate for mine injuries; there is now a teaching video on this subject. Mine injured patients also require more blood for transfusion than other war wounded; providing *safe* blood in sufficient quantities needs a full laboratory service. These patients make for a heavy workload for the nursing staff; there are always many dressings and the patients may stay in hospital for months. The psychological trauma of loss of limb, especially for young adults, is considerable.

Approximately 35 per cent of the mine injured admitted to ICRC hospitals have a surgical amputation of one leg.

▼ *Rehabilitation*

Rehabilitation of a mine victim who has lost a leg requires a prosthetic limb. Each such prosthesis must be individually fitted, has a limited life and so must be replaced after some years, especially in children. A specialised workshop is required for the manufacture and fitting of these prostheses. In most countries affected by mines there is neither resource nor expertise to establish such workshops without outside help.

The ICRC orthopaedic centres may make up to 14,000 prostheses per year on a worldwide basis.

▼ *Economic and social consequences of mines*

The presence of mines in a country affects every aspect of life there. Farm land may be inaccessible. It may be too

and safe water for drinking are frequently mined. Victims of anti-personnel mines who survive injury and treatment are usually left with severe disability, including amputation. This can lead to unemployment, divorce, poor prospects for marriage and being ostracised. All such situations have been witnessed but have not been quantified. The full social and financial implications of thousands of amputees in a country are unknown. Studies are presently being undertaken to determine the full impact of mines on a country recovering from war.

With regard to improving the fate of mine victims, the ICRC has identified several means. These would include an examination of the possibility of using military medical facilities in the treatment of mine injuries, collection of information on de-mining research, establishment of



Photo ICRC/T. Garmann

dangerous to collect firewood in the forests. Roads or tracks may be impassable. A community dependent on agriculture can be devastated. Normal points for collecting clean

a compensation fund for mine-injury victims, collection of information on the trade in anti-personnel mines and sensitization of the public in general.



La révolte des rééducateurs face à la guerre des lâches

Handicap International contre les mines anti-personnel

Quand on a fait du travail de rééducation son métier, quand on a pris parti de défendre les droits des personnes handicapées et leur dignité, de militer pour leur réinsertion socio-professionnelle, il n'est d'autre issue, un jour ou l'autre, que de s'élever contre le massacre silencieux et effroyable des populations civiles qui subissent la présence des mines anti-personnel sur leurs terres.



Photo Handicap International

Selon les estimations des Nations Unies, il y aurait, aujourd'hui, entre 120 et 200 millions de mines anti-personnel actives sur notre planète. Ces chiffres sont par eux-mêmes hallucinants mais ne permettent pas de comprendre toutes les implications de cette arme du pauvre, de cette guerre des lâches.

La mine anti-personnel est bon marché; elle est rapidement, facilement et massivement fabriquée et aisément déployée sur de larges zones de terrain par des militaires.

Contrairement aux armes conventionnelles, une fois armée et camouflée, la mine anti-personnel n'est plus sous le contrôle du militaire qui l'a placée : elle peut frapper de façon indiscriminée les civils ou les militaires.

Une violation des droits de l'homme

Une fois le conflit terminé, les militaires n'enlèvent pas ces engins de mort qui resteront actifs durant des décennies ... jusqu'à ce qu'un paysan, un enfant, une femme qui ramasse du bois marche dessus.

Les mines interdisent l'accès aux terres cultivables, aux hauts plateaux de pâturage, aux points d'eau; elles appauvrissent des populations déjà très déshéritées et elles empêchent la réhabilitation de régions durement touchées par la guerre.

Leur utilisation constitue de ce fait une violation flagrante et directe des droits de l'homme.



Photo Operation SALAM/J. Mohr

Exercice de déminage en Afghanistan

Comment a-t-on pu en arriver là?

De compromissions en trafics louches, les mines anti-personnel furent fabriquées par millions, elles furent vendues partout dans le monde,

même à des pays soumis à l'embargo, elles furent utilisées massivement par des régimes autoritaires et brutaux pour asservir leur propres populations.

Avec le silence complice de tous.



Photo Handicap International

Exercice de déminage en Kurdistan

Le Kurdistan irakien, le Cambodge, l'Afghanistan, le Mozambique, l'Angola ne sont que quelques exemples de pays qui sont gangrenés pour des dizaines d'années par ce fléau qui a déjà fait plus d'un million de victimes directes depuis 10 ans.

Comptez bien : c'est infiniment plus que toutes les armes nucléaires, chimiques et bactériologiques confondues.

Où est la priorité dans la prévention des massacres?

Une campagne de lobbying

Avec d'autres associations dans le monde, Handicap International a décidé de parler, de dénoncer ce massacre au nom des milliers de victimes que nous avons rencontrées et appareillées.

Nous avons investi notre énergie dans une campagne d'information et de sensibilisation afin que nos gouvernements ne puissent plus dire qu'ils ne savaient pas, afin que chaque citoyen-électeur puisse sanctionner par son vote les responsables politiques qui agiraient à nouveau de façon irresponsable et criminelle.

Nous le savons : à long terme, la seule et unique solution sera d'interdire la fabrication, le transfert, la vente et l'usage des mines anti-personnel. C'est la seule voie pour que des civils cessent de mourir en travaillant leurs terres.

Bien sûr, il restera ces dizaines de millions de mines actives. Il faudra nettoyer ces terrains et cela prendra des dizaines d'années.

A ce propos, il est utile de préciser que le **déminage ne doit plus être**

considéré comme une tâche exclusivement militaire, mais qu'il devient une priorité humanitaire au même titre que la santé, l'agriculture ou la reconstruction.

Et le déminage est même plus important dans la mesure où la réussite des programmes de développement est conditionnée, dans les zones minées, à un **d é m i n a g e** préalable.

Une implication dans des opérations de formation

C'est pourquoi Handicap International s'est également investi dans des opérations de formation de démineurs locaux au Kurdistan et au Cambodge.

Alors que la mine a été si facilement et si rapidement placée, il faudra une patience infinie, une discipline rigoureuse et un matériel sophistiqué et coûteux pour la trouver et la neutraliser. Chaque centimètre de terrain devra être inspecté, toute pièce de



Photo Handicap International

métal sera également identifiée et retirée du sol. Enfin, les mines seront détruites et la terre sera rendue à son propriétaire.

L'objectif de la campagne de Handicap International est d'attirer l'attention sur ce scandale quotidien et de sensibiliser d'autres organisations qui, à leur tour, se lanceront dans des opérations de déminage ou contribueront à informer le public de leur pays pour que cesse la guerre des lâches. ■

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Mines Anti-Personnel : Les Faits



Photo CICR

Les mines sont non discriminatoires : elles ne font pas la différence entre combattants et civils.

Conçues pour blesser plutôt que pour tuer, les mines causent des dégâts humains considérables.

Les mines ne disparaissent pas après les conflits : la grande majorité d'entre elles n'ont pas de mécanismes pour les désactiver. Elles rendent inaccessibles de vastes zones de territoire. Une mine peut rester active pendant plus de quarante ans.

La présence des mines empêche les populations de regagner leurs villages ou de cultiver leurs champs. Reconstruction et redémarrage économique des pays concernés sont gravement mis en cause.

Qu'est ce qu'une mine anti- personnel ?

L'un de ces modèles est la petite mine soviétique "papillon", largement utilisée en Afghanistan et particulièrement attirante pour les enfants.

Il y a deux types de mines terrestres : anti-tank et anti-personnel. Elles sont parfois utilisées conjointement.

Les mines anti-personnel sont de plusieurs types : les plus répandues sont à effet de souffle, faites d'une enveloppe plastique contenant l'explosif.

On trouve également des mines à fragmentation et des mines directionnelles qui blessent leurs victimes avec des éclats métalliques ou des billes d'acier. Enfin, des mines bondissantes qui peuvent s'élever à 1 mètre ou 1,5 mètres au dessus du sol avant d'exploser.

Les mines peuvent être posées manuellement une par une ou dispersées par largage d'hélicoptères ou tirs d'artillerie.

Les Nations Unies estiment à plus de 100 millions le nombre de mines terrestres actives dans le monde.

Qui est blessé ?

On estime aujourd'hui que 1 400 personnes sont tuées et 780 sont blessées par des mines terrestres tous les mois. Dans tous les hôpitaux du CICR en Asie, entre janvier 1991 et juin 1992, sur 14 225 victimes de guerre mutilées, 23% étaient blessées par des mines anti-personnel.

Quels pays sont touchés ?

Parmi les 25 pays très sérieusement affectés par le problème, on peut citer l'Afghanistan, l'Angola, le Cambodge, l'Irak, le Mozambique, la Somalie, le Sud Soudan, le Vietnam ou l'ex-Yougoslavie.

En Croatie, on estime que 200 000 mines terrestres ont déjà été posées.

Nombre d'amputés dans les principaux pays touchés :

- | | | |
|--------------|--------|-----------------|
| ■ Cambodge : | 1 pour | 236 habitants |
| ■ Angola : | 1 pour | 470 habitants |
| ■ Somalie : | 1 pour | 650 habitants |
| ■ Ouganda : | 1 pour | 1 100 habitants |

Par comparaison, le pourcentage d'amputés aux Etats-Unis est de 1 pour 22 000 habitants.

Très souvent inaptes au travail, ces victimes sont un poids social énorme pour des communautés déjà pauvres.

Qui fabrique des mines terrestres ?

Sur la liste des quelques 35 pays fabricants, on trouve la France, l'Allemagne, l'Italie, les Pays-Bas, la Suède, la Grande-Bretagne, les Etats-Unis

Comment s'en débarrasser ?

Certaines mines peuvent être achetées pour moins de 1 Dollar; le coût du déminage au Cambodge est aujourd'hui estimé à 1000 \$US par mine. Il y aurait près de 10 millions de mines au Cambodge, et 1 million en Afghanistan.

La seule technique fiable de déminage reste encore aujourd'hui la méthode manuelle où l'on teste le terrain mètre par mètre.

L'opération de déminage des Nations Unies en Afghanistan a déjà fait 16 morts parmi les démineurs pour une superficie nettoyée de 68 km². Statistiquement le déminage fait 1 victime pour 5 000 mines enlevées.

Le déminage est aussi un problème au long cours; les mines posées pendant la seconde guerre mondiale continuent de faire régulièrement des victimes dans des pays comme la France, la Pologne ou la Libye, et ce malgré des efforts massifs.

Quel est le contexte légal ?

L'utilisation des mines est réglementée par la Convention internationale de 1981 sur les armes causant des souffrances excessives, dont l'un des protocoles a pour objet d'interdire l'usage indiscriminé des mines contre les

populations civiles. La mise en application de cette convention est un échec pour plusieurs raisons :

■ Elle ne couvre que les conflits internationaux, alors que la majorité des mines sont utilisées dans des conflits internes.

■ Elle n'a, dix ans après sa promulgation, été ratifiée que par 36 pays.

■ Elle ne concerne ni la fabrication, ni la vente. Focalisé uniquement sur l'utilisation, le texte de cette convention rend quasiment impossible toute notion de contrôle ou de sanction.

■ La France a demandé la convocation d'une Conférence internationale de révision qui pourrait se tenir en 1994.

Handicap International
29 juin 1993. ■

Afghanistan

United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan: Mine Clearance Programme

During the fourteen years of war in Afghanistan, millions of mines were used by all sides involved in the conflict. The vast majority of mine victims are local residents and returning refugees. A major reason why refugees still living in Pakistan choose not to return to their home villages is the presence of mines. In April 1992 when the mass return of refugees started, the number of mine injuries admitted in ICRC hospitals in Kabul, Peshawar, and Quetta, increased up to ten-fold. According to ICRC more than 30% of the patients admitted with mine injuries are children below 15 years of age.

It is estimated that about 200,000 civilians have died and 400,000 have been disabled by mine incidents in Afghanistan. Approximately six thousand more will lose their lives or limbs every year in Afghanistan due to mine incidents.

The United Nations established a mine clearance programme in Afghanistan in 1989, as part of Operation Salam. It was assumed at that time that the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan would precipitate the mass return of refugees. The objectives of the programme, therefore, were to provide Afghan volunteers with a basic knowledge of mines, so that they could return to their villages with some knowledge of mine clearance techniques. At the same time, refugee families were to receive mine awareness training, so that they could travel home in safety.

In the event, the mass return of refugees to Afghanistan only began in 1992. The delay gave the programme time to plan a more co-ordinated and effective approach, and in early 1990 the thrust of the programme was changed to establish organized mine clearance teams capable of operating anywhere in Afghanistan. Since then the

Iraq

United Nations Humanitarian Programme in Iraq: Mine-related Assistance in Northern Iraq

According to UN sources in Baghdad, several thousands of Kurdish inhabitants near the Iranian border have been mutilated during the past two and-a-half years by mines abandoned since the Iraq-Iran war. Not only are the immediate border areas with Iran, Syria and Turkey heavily mined, but mines have also been planted throughout much of the northern Governorates over the past two decades. Many of these mines are in areas currently being repopulated and the death toll and maiming of civilians caused by mines and other unexploded ordinances is a critical problem throughout the north.

There are three groups of areas where mines are widespread. These are:

- Along the border, and especially in those areas along the Iran-Iraq border. These areas include the region around Choman and the upper reaches of the Hamilton road leading to the Haj Omer border point, the area around Penjwin and especially the area from Halabja to the border.

- Areas surrounding military installations, especially in remote areas and including the many strategic mountain-top observation positions. Mines were laid for defensive reasons and the locations of such fields are usually known to local people. No clearing, however, has been made in any of these areas. Since many are on steep mountain sides, there is the attendant risk of many mines being washed down the mountain sides by snow-melt and soil-creep.

- The third group of mine fields are the most problematic, their specific aim is to dissuade the population from re-occupying their land or returning to their original villages. Their locations

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Afghanistan

programme has been operating on an organized and disciplined system, mainly implemented through Afghan Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

The mine clearance programme, which is an integral part of the humanitarian programme for Afghanistan, is now executed by the United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan (UNOCHA).

Components of the Programme

The programme has four components:

■ **Mine awareness.** Teams of instructors train refugees in camps in neighbouring countries and villages in Afghanistan on mine recognition and how to avoid mine accidents. The main audiences are women and school children.

■ **Mine clearance training.** Initially, Afghan volunteers were trained by foreign military experts on mine clearance techniques. Graduates of these courses were then selected to form mine clearance teams. Countries such as Australia, Canada, France Italy, Norway, New Zealand, Turkey, United Kingdom and USA have provided military contingents to train Afghans. Currently the training is done by Afghan instructors under the supervision of an international military expert.

■ **Minefield survey and planning.** Prior to the deployment of mine clearance teams, survey teams conduct a detailed technical survey of the suspected mined area. Once areas are confirmed as being mined, all technical details, including maps drawn by the survey teams, are handed over to the mine clearance teams. The survey teams also brief the clearance team on site as part of the hand-over procedure.

■ **Mine clearance.** Once areas are surveyed they are allocated a priority and the mine clearance teams are tasked to clear the mined areas in order of priority. The mine clearance operation in Afghanistan is mainly manual supported by mine detection dogs. This is a slow but very accurate system. The programme also has a limited mechanical mine clearance capability consisting of two Aardvark flail machines. However, mechanical means are difficult to operate in Afghanistan and can be used only in limited areas.

Organization

The programme is implemented through seven NGOs, of which six are Afghan NGOs. The NGOs are well established and efficiently run, enjoying an excellent reputation among local authorities.

Iraq

vary, but are widespread throughout the so-called "free-fire zones" where all civilian movements were prohibited and include the sides of roads, orchards and vineyards, areas around springs and wells and along mule tracks.

Aside from the widespread distribution of mines, the problem is further complicated by the great diversity of mines that have been employed (14 - 15 different types). These fall into two basic groups, i.e. the anti-personnel mines which deliver only an explosion and more usually maim than kill, and the shrapnel-loaded mines that are especially deadly. The latter are often wired together and explode in clusters. While not the most deadly, the small plastic coated mines are of special concern because their small size makes them difficult to spot and to detect with standard mine-clearing devices. Most of the mines have a long life span, usually up to 45 years.

Persons most at risk are those collecting firewood - which, as spontaneous settlements grow, means that people must venture further into the hills to find supplies; persons getting clean water from mountain springs; and shepherds. Children are the most exposed as they perform many of these tasks.

UN/NGOs Intervention to Date

In addition to some limited mine clearance undertaken by the US military in the immediate vicinity of Dohuk and Zakho, as well as by the Mines Advisory Group - MAG - (still active in the region today), no major demining operation has taken place to date. Political sensitivities, and the high cost related to this type of operation, explain the lack of achievements in demining.

Mine demarcation: In 1991, UNHCR instituted a mine demarcation project in Suleimaniyah Governorate, and by 20 April 1992, some 7,500 signboards and 100 red flags indicating known mine fields, were planted. A similar project in Arbil Governorate was implemented under UNHCR and UNICEF auspices. Since then, the Mines Advisory Group has been involved in similar activities, although at a much reduced scale.

In connection with demining and mine awareness activities proposed in the UN Inter-Agency Cooperation Programme (1 April 1993 - 31 March 1994), the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has identified four distinct but complementary types of activities for

Afghanistan

Clearance Criteria

With so much of Afghanistan affected by mines, priorities for clearance have to be set. Before an area is considered for mine survey or mine clearance, it must meet basic criteria to ensure the Programme operates in a secure environment and in accordance with the needs of the Afghan communities.

The criteria are as follows:

- The area must be secure and free of fighting;
- Population should derive immediate economic or social benefit;
- All parties/groups must be united in requesting assistance;
- Support must be provided by the local population;
- Refugees must be returning to the area;
- Priority is given if funded rehabilitation projects are being delayed.

Achievements

Since the inception of the programme, over 80 million square metres of mined area have been surveyed, mapped and physically marked. Of this area, about 30 million square metres have been cleared of mines. During this operation more than 65,000 mines and other explosive devices have been destroyed. In addition, over 2.3 million individuals have received mine awareness training.

Funding

The programme is funded by voluntary contributions from donor Governments. Funds are requested in Consolidated Appeals issued by DHA. Approximately US \$10 million has been made available in each of the past three years. However, serious cash flow problems have been experienced at times. In late 1992 several mine clearance teams were forced to go on leave without pay due to the non-availability of funds. Meanwhile dozens of requests for mine clearance were received from returning refugees and aid organizations working for the repatriation of refugees.

Future Activities

It is estimated that 50,000,000 sq mt of high priority mined areas remain. Clearance will cost approx. US \$50 million and will take about five years to achieve at the current rate of funding. The programme is capable of expanding to double its capacity, provided that an increased and reliable flow of funds is available. This would allow the clearance of high priority areas necessary for the resumption of normal life in most of Afghanistan within three years, and save an estimated 3,000 lives and 6,000 amputees. ■

Iraq

implementation by UN/OPS, with NGO support (proposed budget: US \$1,250,000):

■ **Mine awareness:** Supplies and technical expertise required for the formulation and implementation of mine awareness training programmes are proposed. Those rural communities experiencing the greatest danger will be targeted. Local institutions and non-governmental organisations will be responsible for implementation. (budget: US \$50,000).

■ **Training programmes for demarcation and clearing:** Supplies and specialised technical expertise required for the formulation and implementation of training programmes will be provided under this project in co-operation with selected international/specialized NGOs (MAG and/or Handicap International). The instructional and leadership skills required for the demarcation and clearance of mines will be transmitted through pre-identified volunteers and local NGOs. (budget: US \$200,000).

■ **Demarcation and clearance:** Supplies, vehicles and specialized equipment needed for operational mines demarcation and clearance activities will be provided. (budget: US\$ 500,000).

■ **Strengthening the medical treatment facilities (prosthesis workshop) in Suleimaniyah Governorate:** To rehabilitate people injured by mines through the provision of specialized technical expertise for the local production of artificial limbs, educational and raw materials will be delivered to designated project areas. Other support will include specialized technical expertise to sustain the ongoing operation of a prosthesis workshop* and a mines casualty/rehabilitation programme in the Suleimaniyah Governorate. (Budget: US \$500,000).

Funding currently available for this project is US \$500,000.

On 30 September 1993, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs endorsed a demining proposal for the north from a Danish NGO, to which the Danish Government is contributing Danish krone 11,358,000 or approximately US \$1,658,000. The project's aims are identical to those activities performed by MAG. Activities are expected to start shortly.

*Since 1992, Handicap International (in collaboration with MAG) has been operating an orthopaedic workshop in the General Hospital of Suleimaniyah, including the local production of artificial prostheses and wheel chairs. ■



UN General Assembly Resolution on Demining

General Assembly
Forty-eighth session
Agenda item 71

A/RES/48/75K
16 December 1993

GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

Moratorium on the export of anti-personnel land mines

The General Assembly,

Noting that there are as many as 85 million uncleared land mines throughout the world, particularly in rural areas,

Expressing deep concern that such mines kill or maim hundreds of people each week, mostly unarmed civilians, obstruct economic development and have other severe consequences, which include inhibiting the repatriation of refugees and the return of internally displaced persons,

Recalling with satisfaction the adoption of resolution 48/7 of 19 October 1993 by which it, *inter alia*, requested the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report on the problems caused by mines and other unexploded devices,

Convinced that a moratorium by States exporting anti-personnel land-mines that pose grave dangers to civilian populations would reduce subsequently the human and economic costs resulting from the use of such devices and would complement the aforementioned initiatives,

Noting with satisfaction that several States have already declared moratoriums on the export, transfer or purchase of anti-personnel land mines and related devices,

1. *Calls upon* States to agree to a moratorium on the export of anti-personnel land mines that pose grave dangers to civilian populations;
2. *Urges* States to implement such a moratorium;
3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to prepare a report concerning progress on this initiative, including possible recommendations regarding further appropriate measures to limit the export of anti-personnel land mines, and to submit it to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session under the item entitled "General and complete disarmament".

Adopted by consensus on 16 December 1993

The Department of Humanitarian Affairs at Work

(Mid-August - Mid-October 1993)

These past four months have been a period of intense activity for the Department, both in New York and in Geneva. Since July 1994, the Department issued 8 international appeals for humanitarian assistance. Twelve relief co-ordination missions were undertaken and 120 situation reports on disasters and emergencies were issued. The Department took an active part in 8 international meetings on humanitarian assistance across the world. At the same time prevention activities were vigorously pursued, and preparations for the 1994

World Conference on Disaster Reduction intensified. The Disaster Management Training Programme also held 7 national training seminars during that period.

Rather than listing all activities, it was decided to concentrate on some key aspects of the Department's work in order to give a broad overview of what it does. More detailed information is available on our electronic network, *UNIENET*, as well as in *Stop Disasters* which is entirely dedicated to prevention and disaster reduction undertakings.

News from New York

ANGOLA: The Security Council in September noted the deterioration of the grave humanitarian situation in Angola and passed a resolution strongly condemning the repeated attacks carried out against personnel working to provide humanitarian assistance.

The first relief flights in nine months reached the besieged city of Cuito on 16 and 17 October 1993. Forty-six metric tons of oil, pulses, cereals, high protein biscuits, sugar and medication were delivered. It is estimated that in Cuito approximately 40,000 people mainly women and children are living in appalling conditions. These flights were suspended for a few days due to a disagreement between the Government of Angola and the National Union for Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) over the inspection of the plane's cargo.

A few days later, flights were resumed and over 100 foreigners stranded in Cuito were evacuated. Since then all besieged cities have received humanitarian assistance, including Huambo. WFP estimates that one thousand people a day have been dying from the war or the effects of the war.

An appeal, launched in May 1993, calling for US \$226 million has received to date only US \$46 million. Funds are needed to respond to the dire situation prevailing in Angola.

LIBERIA: By mid-August 1993, The United Nations resumed humanitarian relief deliveries to parts of Liberia controlled by the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). The first convoy of 21 vehicles carrying food aid, nutritional supplements and medical supplies left Monrovia on 13 August for the area around Kakata where there are many displaced people in urgent need of assistance. Of particular concern were an estimated 100,000 malnourished children. Relief has continued to reach the afflicted population. In August, a mission went to the area to assess the needs in the war-ravaged country. An inter-agency consolidated appeal is expected to be launched shortly.

SOMALIA: The Department is planning to convene its fourth Co-ordination Meeting on Humanitarian Assistance. This is tentatively scheduled for 29 November to 1 December 1993, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The basic agenda of the meeting will be *i)* to review progress made since the March co-ordination meeting; *ii)* to discuss the requirements for continued relief and post-emergency rehabilitation in the coming months; *iii)* to initiate consultations on planning for longer-term recovery. A team has been dispatched to Nairobi to finalize documentation to be presented at the Addis-Ababa meeting.

In spite of the tense situation in Mogadishu South, humanitarian agencies have been able to implement a wide range of relief and rehabilitation activities throughout the country. Starvation has largely been eradicated, children have been protected through improved nutrition and massive immunization programmes, food production has expanded and commercial activities have steadily increased.

SUDAN: Ambassador Vicki Traxler was appointed by the Secretary-General as the Special Envoy for Humanitarian Affairs for the Sudan in May 1993. During his visit to Sudan in August, he negotiated with the Government the creation of a follow-up committee on the implementation of agreements pertaining to International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs). These organizations have been unable to operate or have operated in a very limited way hampered by problems ranging from travel permits to lack of security. To facilitate the work of INGOs, a committee was established to deal with their daily problems. Ambassador Traxler also negotiated successfully the opening of new routes by road, rail and barge. These new corridors would allow access for a greater number of relief convoys to reach the afflicted population.

On 28 September 93, an Informal Consultation on Priority Emergency Needs in Sudan was convened in Geneva. This meeting was attended by over 60 persons representing the donor community, the relevant UN agencies, six INGOs and ICRC. The meeting provided a forum for frank discussion of the problems facing humanitarian assistance in the Sudan and for reviewing the resource needs of the UN agencies until early 1994.

A UN inter-agency consolidated appeal will be launched in the early part of 1994. It is likely that another mission will take place by end-November, which would seek to develop the outlines of the overall UN strategy for humanitarian assistance efforts in 1994.

FORMER YUGOSLAVIA: On 8 October, the UN consolidated inter-agency appeal for the former Yugoslavia was launched in New York and Geneva to provide winterization protection for the last three months of 1993 and to ensure assistance for the most vulnerable people for the first six months of 1994.

The appeal is for a beneficiary population of 4,259,000 with a budget of US \$696,550,854. The operational priorities continue to be basic survival needs for the displaced and destitute, whose survival is now dependent mostly upon the provision of health care, food, shelter and fuel.

ZAIRE: An inter-agency humanitarian needs assessment mission led by DHA commenced its work in Zaire on 23 August. The purpose of the mission was to assess the urgent humanitarian requirements, particularly of the internally displaced persons and to identify ways by which those needs could effectively be addressed. The mission spent three weeks in the country, visiting the provinces of Shaba, North Kivu as well as West and East Kasai. An appeal is expected to be launched shortly.

LANDMINES: A new item on the agenda of the UN General Assembly on assistance for mine clearance was discussed on 19 October. An estimated 100 million land mines in 62 countries continue to kill or injure innocent men, women and children at a rate of 200 to 300 a month. The General

Assembly called for a report by 1994 on improving international mine-clearing efforts.

For additional information, please see «The Scourge of Land Mines» on pages 5-7. Mr. Eliasson, USG of Humanitarian Affairs wrote an OP-Ed article on land mines, which was first published in the *New York Times* on 22 October 1993 and in the *International Herald Tribune* (see page 3).

TASK FORCE ON THE RELIEF TO DEVELOPMENT CONTINUUM: The first meeting of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Task Force on the Relief to Development Continuum took place in New York on 6 October. The meeting strongly supported the emphasis placed by General Assembly resolution 46/182 on the continuum as one of the fundamental principles of a co-ordinated multilateral approach to humanitarian emergencies. A clearer definition and further elaboration of the concept of the continuum, particularly in relation to its practical application, was considered critical to the process. Two working groups were established: the first to discuss a unified definition of the concept and the development of a system-wide operational framework, and the other to elaborate a financial strategy. The Task Force will meet again at the end of November or early December and is expected to complete its work by March 1994.

INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE: On 27 October 1993, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee met at its sixth session, in New York. It discussed among other things humanitarian mandates in conflict situations involving peacekeeping, follow-up to the agreed conclusions of ECOSOC, terms of reference of the IASC, the consolidated appeal process and resource mobilization, and the relief, rehabilitation and development continuum. It also reviewed country situations with particular attention to Somalia, Angola, Sudan, Iraq, the former Yugoslavia and the Caucasus countries. Also on the agenda were the definition of complex emergencies, the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and the 1994 Yokohama conference, information system of humanitarian assistance, demining and the question of security.

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION: On the second Wednesday of the month of October, the International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction is observed every year to enhance awareness of what can be done to reduce vulnerability to natural disasters. The focus for 1993 on schools and hospitals was particularly appropriate because hospital services are needed when disaster strikes and schools can be turned into valuable community disaster shelters.

On 12 October, Mr. Jan Eliasson, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Mr. James Bruce, the Chairman of the Scientific and Technical Committee of the IDNDR, held a press briefing. Mr. Eliasson said that "natural disasters had caused damages of about US \$44 billion in 1991 and about \$62 billion in 1992. Most of the damage had been in

developing countries where little was insured" he said, which points to the need for disaster preparedness and prevention. Mr. Bruce said that, as it is well known, «earthquakes and storms don't kill people, collapsing buildings do», which underscores the importance of the construction and maintenance of disaster-resistant buildings.

Mr. Bruce said that the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, to be held from 23 to 27 May 1994, in Yokohama, Japan, would discuss, among other things, safe building designs for the homes of the poor in developing countries.

CONFLICT AND HUMANITARIAN ACTION:

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Peace Academy and the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton, co-sponsored a conference on *Conflict and Humanitarian Action*, from 22 to 23 October, at Princeton University, USA. This conference was designed to explore the new connection between humanitarian action and peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Among the participants were several high UN officials, Ambassadors, academicians, university professors and representatives of large INGOs. Mr. Eliasson, USG of Humanitarian Affairs was on two panels: one on the *Role of the United Nations in the Prevention of Humanitarian Emergencies* and the other on the *Consideration of Humanitarian Issues before the Security Council*.



Photo M. Vermyse

Relief Co-ordination

BELARUS - FLOODS: Extensive floods, caused by rainfall three times the average monthly rate, struck the southern part of Belarus in July.

The Government of Belarus reported the direct total material damage at approximately US \$100 million, including: the flooding of thousands of houses and hectares of farmland and damage to major infrastructure and power lines. Brest and Gomel regions were the hardest hit. Urgent preventive and relief measures taken by local and republican systems for fighting emergencies prevented a high number of casualties or ecologic and economic damage. Having exhausted its own resources, the Government of Belarus requested international assistance in the form of medicines and food. DHA issued an appeal for aid, as well as three situation reports.

CHINA - DAM BURST: On 31 August, the Government of China reported a dam burst at the Gouhou Reservoir in Gonghe County of the Hainan Tibet Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai Province.

On 14 September, 290 persons were reported dead, dozens missing and 330 hospitalized. Over 30,000 people were evacuated from the disaster area, in addition to some 2,800 people who were severely affected. Many houses and hundreds of hectares of farmland were destroyed. The infrastructure was severely affected with economic losses over US \$27 million. The Central Government considered this a severe disaster and asked the international community for assistance.

Contributions reported to DHA amounted to US \$670,000, of which US \$100,000 was channelled through the Department, itself. A portion of the contributions will be used to finance a UNDP Project "Emergency Relief for Dam Burst in Qinghai Province". DHA issued three situation reports.

GUINEA (REPUBLIC OF) - FLOODS: In addition to leaving thousands homeless and without means of assistance, heavy flooding from torrential rains in late July caused considerable damage to the area of Gueckedou in southwestern Guinea and surrounding regions. Since the city of Gueckedou is a refugee assistance centre, emergency aid was already on site and being co-ordinated by the local disaster management team. Authorities provided the affected population with compensation for damage to, or loss of, housing.

The IFRC provided first aid, UNICEF cleaned family wells and MSF reinforced its supervision of medical centres. All donor assistance was carried out within the framework of

ongoing refugee programmes in the region. DHA issued two situation reports.

HONDURAS - TROPICAL STORM "GERT" AND FLOODS: Serious flooding, caused by two weeks of continuous rainfall following tropical storm "Bret", struck the northeastern Mosquitia region of Honduras in late August. The situation was further aggravated by tropical storm "Gert" which hit on 17 September. Subsequent rains caused further flooding in the Mosquitia as well as the northwestern regions. Reported were 27 people dead, 12 missing, 360,000 directly affected, plus extensive damage to agriculture, roads and bridges and river banks. Relief efforts were further hampered by the difficulty to access the affected areas due to flooding. DHA-Geneva made an emergency cash grant of US \$25,000 and issued three situation reports.

KAZAKHSTAN - FLOODS: In late April, melting snow caused major flooding in the central Asian nation of Kazakhstan. Heaviest losses were sustained in the Atyraskaya, Zapadna-Kazakhstanskaya and Aktjubinskaya regions. In addition to major infrastructural damage, ten lives were lost and some 30,000 people were left homeless. Following an appeal for international assistance by the Government of Kazakhstan, DHA-Geneva airlifted, from its Pisa warehouse, 35 tons of relief supplies donated by the Governments of Italy, Japan, Luxembourg and Switzerland. Five situation reports were issued and US \$280,000 was contributed through DHA.

LEBANON (SOUTH): In late July, Israeli Defence Forces attacked South Lebanon and West Bekaa. The Secretary-General sent a DHA-led inter-agency mission to Lebanon for the preparation of a UN consolidated appeal for those in the conflict-affected areas.

The mission made on-site assessments in affected villages and towns, meeting with returnees and other affected persons. The problems and requirements of the victims were reviewed with national authorities, including the High Relief Committee presided by the President of the Council of Ministers, regional authorities and local and international NGOs.

The appeal, launched on 20 August, amounted to a total of US \$28,745,200 covering *inter alia* the areas of housing, emergency food aid, agriculture, health care, water supply/sanitation and education. (see article page 38).

EMERGENCY AIRLIFT TO LEBANON: In order to assess the needs of the displaced population in South Lebanon, DHA organized an emergency airlift to Beirut on Sunday, 15 August. The cargo, valued at US \$150,000, consisted of a donation by the Italian Government of approximately 28 tons of kitchen sets, generators, water tanks, plastic sheeting and covers, jerrycans and blankets, as well as a donation by Luxembourg of two tons of nails and hammers.

MEXICO - TROPICAL STORM "GERT" AND FLOODS: Due to heavy rainfall following Tropical Storm "Gert" in late September, the Panuco river basin in eastern Mexico was flooded. Thirty-five people were reported dead, over 200,000 evacuated from danger zones, and several hundred thousand hectares of grazing and farming land were devastated. The Mexican Government mobilized its full resources while also appealing for international assistance. DHA-Geneva made an emergency grant of US \$27,000 and issued three situation reports.

NICARAGUA - TROPICAL STORMS "BRET" AND "GERT": On 10 August and 14 September, tropical storms "Bret" and "Gert" caused damage across the entire nation of Nicaragua, including both Atlantic and Pacific coastal areas. Severe rainfall and flooding affected 63,404 people with 13 dead and 24 missing. DHA issued seven situation reports.

PHILIPPINES: Beginning on 4 October, Typhoon "Kadiang" - international code name "Flo" - hit northern and central Luzon with heavy rains, flashfloods, landslides and lahar flows from Mount Pinatubo. Seventeen provinces and almost two million persons were affected: of this 57 people were reported dead, 44 missing and 38 injured. Thousands of houses were destroyed or damaged with total damages to agricultural products, infrastructure and property estimated by the National Disaster Coordinating Council at US \$102 billion. DHA issued three information reports.

UKRAINE - FLOODS: Heavy rains and flooding struck several areas in the northern part of the Ukraine in late July. The ability of approximately 300,000 people to produce foodstuffs and fodder for cattle was hindered, especially in the Rivne region. These areas are among those earlier affected by the Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster.

The Government of the Ukraine reported the total damage at US \$49.2 million, including: destruction of and damage to over 4,000 residential buildings, hundreds of thousands of hectares of agricultural terrain plus extensive land and water infrastructure.

Following the Government of the Ukraine's request for urgent aid, especially medicines, to the affected areas, DHA issued two situation reports and an appeal for international assistance.

At the **MEETING ON EMERGENCY RELIEF ITEMS ORGANIZED BY UNDP/IAPSO IN BRUSSELS**, 29-30 September, DHA was represented by one staff member of the Relief Co-ordination Branch. The meeting defined standards and procedures for the selection of relief goods and discussed related issues, including procurement, the keeping of stocks for immediate availability and aspects of appropriateness and effectiveness of various groups of relief items.

Georgia

Over 100,000 Displaced Persons are Evacuated from the Mountains where they Sought Refuge

The United Nations appeal for Georgia which was issued in March identified a total of 146,000 displaced persons as a result of the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and requested assistance for 108,000 most needy displaced. As the conflict in Abkhazia continued unabated, the number of displaced persons increased to 160,000 already in August. The capture of Sukhumi and take over of the remaining areas of Abkhazia by Abkhaz forces created a new wave of approximately 100,000 displaced persons. Of these, some 30,000 reached Tbilisi with many thousands more still on the move. About 60,000 fled from warm coastal areas to the Svanetia mountains: out of them, thousands are still living precariously amid snow and ice, while some 20,000 are reported to have already reached Zugdidi, capital of Mingrelia, and another 20-30,000 are in Kutaisi area. Some 5,000 have been evacuated by sea to Sochi in the Russian Federation.

At the request of the Government of Georgia, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) issued and disseminated an appeal for international emergency assistance to the new wave of dis-

placed. Costs were estimated at US\$ 2.8 million. In order to overcome logistic problems, DHA approached governments to obtain helicopters and other transport means to carry relief supplies from Tbilisi to the displaced in the mountains.



Photos DHA/S. Piazza

One of DHA's rescue operations

ADHA reconnaissance and co-ordination team - mobilized through its *Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief (MCDA)* - consisting of eight people (two DHA co-ordination officers, one United Nations communications expert, two Swiss logisticians and three Austrian logistic and medical officers) landed in Kutaisi, in the midst of the affected area, on 10 October with satellite communication equipment (in addition to the expert assigned by DHA to assist the UN Interim Office in Tbilisi). The DHA chartered Belgian aircraft had onboard clothing and shoes donated by Italy and Switzerland.

At the time of writing (13 October 1993) a 4-man World Food Programme (WFP) mission, led by the Director of the Emergency Division as well as a UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) assessment mission were in Georgia. In the course of their stay in Georgia, the three

Teams (DHA, UNHCR, WFP) working with Mr. Starcevic/UNIO's Office reviewed the situation, and made recommendations with regard to the manner in which the provision of humanitarian assistance to Georgia from the United Nations will be coordinated and delivered.

International assistance to the new wave of displaced persons in Georgia came forth rapidly. In this context, WFP sent by air 220 tons of food supplies consisting of 11,000 family parcels (this airlift was financed partially by DHA with a sum of US \$100,000). The United Kingdom

Government sent 1.3 tons of medicines to the Georgian Government and 10 tons of blankets to the DHA team in Georgia. Contributions in cash, kind and services were made by the Governments of Austria, Belgium, Italy, Netherlands, Russian Federation, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, UNHCR and several non-governmental organizations. The evacuation of the displaced persons from mountain areas proceeded smoothly with the transport means (helicopters and trucks) provided by the Georgian Government and the helicopters supplied by the Govern-

ments of Armenia, Russian Federation and Ukraine.

DHA sent on 12 October 1993 from its warehouse in Pisa a second aircraft with ready-made meals donated by the Austrian Government and 540 kitchensets/1.7 ton of clothing and shoes donated by the Italian Government.

Co-ordination meetings on the Georgian crisis with United Nations agencies, the Red Cross (ICRC and the Federation) and non-governmental organizations have been convened by DHA in Geneva throughout the crisis. ■

India

Earthquake Kills 10,000: Tragic Finale to a 10-Day Festival Honouring the God of Good Luck

Early in the morning of 30 September 1993, an earthquake measuring 6.4 on the Richter scale wreaks havoc in the south-eastern area of the Maharashtra State of India, collapsing buildings and burying thousands of sleeping villagers. Most of them had just been celebrating "Ganesha", the Hindu God of Good Luck and New Beginnings.

Immediately after, in Geneva, the DHA Duty Officer is woken by the alert of the earthquake, as reported by geological monitoring stations, and

immediately starts the action which will lead to one of the most intensive co-ordination efforts undertaken by the DHA Relief Co-ordination Branch during 1993.

As local rescuers begin to dig out their friends and families from beneath the rubble, DHA alerts the international community to the earthquake and through the International



Photo DHA/G. Fontana



Photo DHA/G. Fontana

Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG), initiates an exchange of early information on the disaster situation as it comes to light from India.

authorities and military units. The State Government of Maharashtra, situated in Bombay, was given overall responsibility for conducting the relief operation whilst the National

... the fact that everyone in the village knew where everyone else lived made the casualty and body accountability an easier task.

A few days later, the world will know that more than 10,000 people perished in the earthquake which seriously affected more than 60 villages in the Osmanabad and Latur districts of Maharashtra and triggered a massive rescue operation, spearheaded by relief units from the Indian army and numerous local non-governmental and private organizations.

● National Response

Immediately, as the consequences of the earthquake became clear, the Government of India launched a major relief operation including civil

Government in New Delhi, through the Relief Commissioner in the Ministry of Agriculture, provided support from the national level as necessary.

Many national and local NGOs responded by sending relief teams to the affected area. Initially, this caused some confusion since most of the teams went to the villages of Killari and Sastour which had been reported as most affected. The congestion at these

villages was sorted out upon the arrival of military units which took over operational coordination of the relief resources and distributed available resources over the whole affected area.

● Search and Rescue

In the immediate phase following the earthquake, search and rescue was carried out by the survivors and local population using their hands and simple tools. The effort to localize and free trapped victims and extricate survivors was reinforced following the arrival of military units. There was no need for protracted deep penetration rescue work or the use of sophisticated tools. The victims were trapped in the vicinity of the sleeping areas and, therefore, not difficult to locate once the rubble was removed. Also, the fact that everyone in the village knew where everyone else lived made the casualty and body accountability an easier task.

● DHA-Geneva

Within 24 hours of the earthquake, three members of the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) Stand-by Team were dispatched to India and a further three UNDAC team members remained on alert for a period of twenty-four hours, ready to travel should it be necessary. Upon arrival in India, the UNDAC team leader remained in New Delhi to reinforce the disaster management capacity of the Resident Coordinator's Office, to advise the central authorities and to liaise with donors. The other two Team members continued

... the team quickly established that the figures quoted by the media in the first days after the earthquake were exaggerated.

immediately for the disaster area in order to liaise with the local relief authorities on needs assessment and coordination of relief. Due to time constraints, the team concentrated on the most severely affected areas, making contact with local district authorities including those of the health sector. From the information received, the team quickly established that the figures of dead and injured quoted by the media in the first days after the earthquake (ranging to 30,000 people dead), were exaggerated. The team's early estimates, after interviews with local officials, were close to those finally determined figures of 10,000 killed.

In Geneva, the DHA Operations Team maintained a round-the-clock presence at Headquarters over the period 1 - 3 October 1993, as reports from the UNDAC Team and the UN Disaster Management Team in New Delhi arrived and numerous inquiries were received from donors, NGOs and the Press.

● International Assistance

India, a disaster-prone country with vast experience in emergency management and large resources available for this purpose, has in the past not requested international assistance in meeting the needs of a disaster situation. In keeping with the tradition of managing a disaster response with the use of national resources, India chose also this time not to make an open-ended appeal to the international community for assistance.

However, experience shows that at the occurrence of a sudden on-set disaster with such serious consequences in damage and loss of life as the Maharashtra earthquake, the

... India chose not to make an open-ended appeal to the international community for assistance.

international community reacts immediately with expressions of sympathy and offers of aid during the immediate survival phase. Therefore, a flow of contributions in cash and kind arrived in the country from various governments, United Nations Agencies and NGOs.

National resources, including the district administration and the army, responded swiftly to mitigate India's worst earthquake in half a century. The official intervention was quickly followed by the substantial contribution of Indian NGOs which rushed into the area. After an initial and understandable period of confusion in the first few days, operations were streamlined. Already a few days after the earthquake it was felt that the contributions in kind made so far would suffice, and that any further such contributions would serve no useful purpose.

● Towards Rehabilitation

As the international focus is turned away from Osmanabad and Latur,

the villagers that have been left without their homes and belongings are facing a long way to rehabilitation and return to normal life. It has to be stressed that with the new challenge of the earthquake, a massive rehabilitation and reconstruction effort needs to start immediately and link outside support with the self-reliance efforts of the affected population. As the DHA UNDAC team left India, the Government had started detailed assessments of the longer term needs created by the earthquake and the international community had already indicated its willingness to support this effort. For the people of Osmanabad and Latur, this is likely to determine what their future will hold after a night which has changed their lives forever.



Photo DHA/G. Fontana

Lebanon

Emergency Reconstruction in the South

The widespread Israeli attack on southern Lebanon at the end of July 1993 left an intense trail of destruction to private dwellings and property. As a result, thousands of houses were damaged or completely destroyed.

The Secretary-General sent an inter-agency mission to Lebanon for the preparation of a consolidated appeal for the affected population. Headed by the Chief of the DHA Relief Co-ordination Branch, Mr. Robert Souria, the mission, which lasted from 8 to 13 August, also included the participation of WHO, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNHCR, FAO and Habitat. Responding to an invitation by the Government of

Lebanon, Under-Secretary-General of Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Jan Eliasson, visited the Presidents of the Lebanese General Assembly, the Council of Ministers and of the country itself. Immediately following this visit, an appeal was launched on 20 August 1993 amounting to a total of US \$28,745,200 covering *inter alia* the areas of housing, emergency food aid, agriculture, health care, water supply/sanitation and education.

After having met the accurate emergency relief needs, it was then necessary to enable the immediate start of emergency rehabilitation operations. Commencing in September and continuing to this day, DHA made available to UNCHS-Habitat an advance sum of US \$5 million from the Central Emergency Fund (CERF). The resources were allocated for an emergency housing reconstruction programme to be implemented by UNCHS-Habitat in close co-operation with the High Relief Committee. The Committee, presided by the Prime Minister, is responsible for the overall direction and management of humanitarian assistance operations. UNCHS-Habitat also liaises and

closely co-operates with the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) as the project area is situated largely in the UNIFIL zone of operations.

Owing to the extent of the destruction in the housing sector, the project caters only to immediate housing needs, leaving for a later stage the upgrade to the standard previously existing. The project also includes a limited contribution to the most urgent repairs of social service infrastructure, namely repair of primary and complementary schools, dispensaries, community houses, etc. This activity is implemented by UNIFIL, with resources provided by the project. It was considered important that the restoration of the communal infrastructure of the villages accompany the housing reconstruction in order to recreate a congenial environment in the different villages.

The UNCHS-Habitat project, carried out together with the two subcontracted NGOs, Save the Children Federation and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), was identified and defined on the basis of an initial quick field survey. Detailed surveys of badly damaged and destroyed housing units followed. The project covers ten of the most seriously affected villages and aims to reconstruct 450 units which have been partially destroyed. Beneficiaries were selected on the basis of a set of criteria: the socio-economic profile of the families and the degree of damage and destruction of the dwelling. Reconstruction of destroyed units in all cases will be limited to a maximum of 60 m², i.e. 60 per cent of the original unit of 100 m² or more.

The major objective of the project is to quickly respond and deliver completed works to the beneficiaries before the end of December 1993, the onset of winter. ■



*From left to right:
The UN Co-ordinator,
Mr. H. van der Kloet;
Under-Secretary-General
of Humanitarian Affairs,
Mr. Jan Eliasson; H.E.
E. Hraoui, President of
the Rep. of Lebanon; and
Mr. R. Souria, Chief of
the Relief Co-ordination
Branch.*

Photo DHA

A Demonstration of International Co-operation in Emergency Response: Exercise '93

"Breaking Ground for when the Ground Breaks"

Exercise '93, the first large-scale international exercise in emergency response, was the stage for five days of intensive and highly successful disaster relief operations. Sponsored by the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), it was hosted and organized by the Government of Austria from 1 - 6 September 1993, in the region of Baden-Wiener Neustadt (Lower Austria).

More than 2,000 participants from the four corners of the globe took part in this "ground breaking" event. Numerous countries representing Central and Eastern Europe and the developing world, as well as distinguished International Organizations including NATO, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the European Community, met in Austria to test, for the first time, international procedures developed by DHA. Working within the framework of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG), these procedures are to be employed at the site of a major disaster.

As the blow of the simulated earthquake struck "X-land", a densely populated industrial area, 14 international search and rescue teams with specialized gear for detection and



Photo DHA

excavation, search dogs and handlers, as well as medical and first aid equipment were deployed. Upon arrival at the disaster site, the SAR Teams cooperated with the members of the recently-established United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) Stand-by Team at the On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC), to carry out their rescue operations. UNDAC and OSOCC have been conceived as instruments to support and assist the local emergency

management authorities of an affected country following a major sudden onset emergency.

The SAR Teams operated on more than thirty "damage sites" of different kinds and levels of difficulty. Soldiers and engineers of the Austrian N.B.C. Defence School spent three months preparing these facilities which housed volunteer "victims" of the disaster, together with dummies in more dangerous locations. One of the most interesting aspects of the exercise was

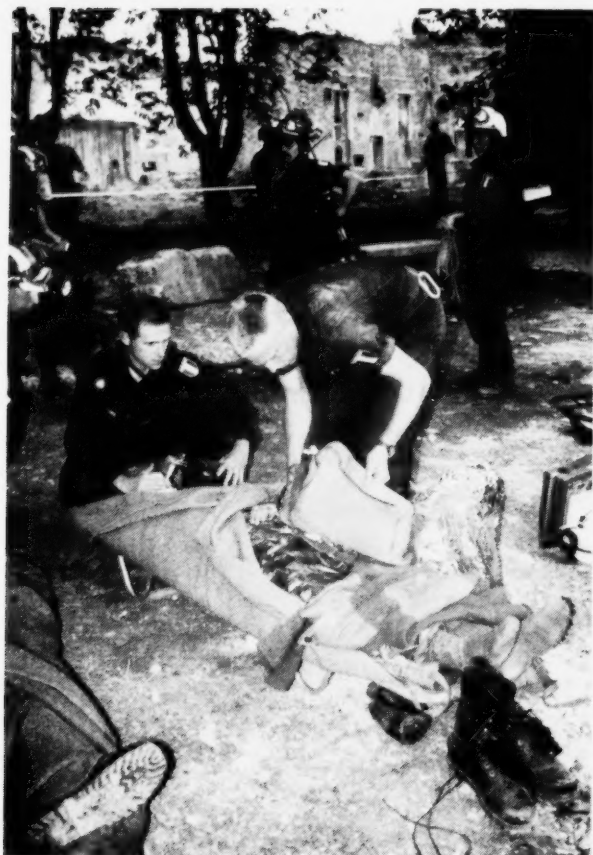


Photo DHA

the opportunity given to the Teams to co-operate with, and get to know, each other as is the goal in a real emergency. In addition, they were able to compare the equipment and techniques used at the Static Exhibition and Demonstration of SAR Techniques on the final day of the Exercise.

DHA procedures for internationally-coordinated mobilization of Military and Civil Defence Assets (MCDA) were also tested in the field for the first time, with air transport provided for an SAR team and demonstrations of air-dropping of relief supplies.

Over 160 delegates from governmental, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations participated as observers to Exercise '93. Furthermore, members of 39 diplomatic missions and international organizations accredited to the Government of Austria were invited to share this unique and unprecedented

experience in the field of humanitarian assistance.

At the closing meeting, SAR team leaders and other participants were unanimous in applauding the organization of the Exercise. The value of the new procedures for on-site co-ordination, such as UNDAC and OSOCC, developed by DHA and INSARAG to assist the authorities of an affected country, as well as the possibilities for more effective use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in the future was appreciated considerably. Above all, it was the experience gained during the Exercise and the contacts made that would bear fruit should the next occasion to bring the participants together be the chaotic site of a real disaster, working together to save real lives.

A "volunteer"
victim of the
simulated
earthquake

DHA Warehouse in Pisa

*Goods donated by the Governments
of Italy, Japan, Luxembourg and USSR.*

Blankets 150X210 cm (50% wool) 150X220 cm (60% wool)	Plastic pallets
Tents (12.5 m ²) (24 m ²) (32 m ²) (43 m ²) (46 m ²)	Generators (4 kva) (6.5 kva) (12 kva)
Plastic water tanks (3,000 l) (3,500 l) (7,500 l)	Trailers for generators
Jerry cans (12 l)	Transformers
Tarpaulins (24 m ²)	Extensible cables (50 m)
Plastic sheeting (365 m ²) (400 m ²)	Kitchen sets
	Hammers
	Nails
	Pickaxes
	Saws
	Shovels
	Spades
	Nylon rope (reels 200 m)
	Thermic containers
	NBC Protection clothing

A kitchen set is composed of various cooking and table utensils.

*For further details and information on availability of goods in stock,
please call the Relief Co-ordination Branch of DHA-Geneva
9171234 or 9173290.*

Complex Emergencies

Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan (UNOCHA)

A serious epidemic of cholera broke out in Afghanistan in late June. Within a few weeks, the epidemic had spread to 22 of the 29 provinces. In response, Mr. Sotirios Mousouris, Co-ordinator of Humanitarian Assistance, established a United Nations Task Force on Cholera to take urgent joint action. WHO and UNICEF, in co-operation with the Ministry of Public Health, dispatched large quantities of medical supplies to the affected areas, carried out chlorination of wells, launched a mass awareness campaign through the local media, and trained health staff on the prevention and control of cholera. By September, the epidemic had been contained.

Following a period of intense fighting in Kabul in the first five months of 1993, relative calm returned to most parts of the city at the end of May. In mid-July, the United Nations was able to re-establish presence of a core group of international staff on a rotating basis. During the period 1 July to 30 September, more than 800 mts of wheat, medical supplies and shelter materials were transported to Kabul via UN convoys. These supplies were used to provide assistance to displaced people and other vulnerable groups in the city, as well as to support health institutions, and ongoing shelter and sanitation projects.

The UN was not able to re-establish a permanent presence of international staff in Jalalabad and Kandahar due to security considerations. However, a number of brief missions of international staff were undertaken to Jalalabad. In the period 1 July to 30 September, more than 5,000 mts of wheat were delivered to Jalalabad to feed some 20,000 displaced people from Kabul. In Kandahar, a small number of food-for-work projects continued to be supported and medical supplies were delivered to health institutions.

In Herat and Mazar-i-Sharif, the UN was able to maintain a resident presence of international staff during the period. UN activities in Herat continued to focus on the large number of refugees returning from Iran. In Mazar-i-Sharif, the UN supported some 20,000 displaced people from Kabul, as well as refugees from Tajikistan. Assistance in the sectors of shelter, irrigation and potable water was also provided to returnee communities in the North. When a strong earthquake struck Jurm District of Badakhshan province on 9 August, relief supplies were immediately dispatched to 1,260 persons who had become homeless.

During the period, the UNOCHA Mine Clearance Programme continued its activities in Afghanistan virtually

uninterrupted. The last expert contingent, provided by the Australian Government, withdrew from Afghanistan in July. UNOCHA is in the process of recruiting a small number of international experts to carry out the monitoring and supervising functions of the Australian contingent. The Programme now has sufficient qualified Afghan instructors to conduct the required training courses. In early October, the Mine Clearance Programme Manager visited Iran to discuss with Government officials the possibility of establishing a mine awareness programme for Afghan refugees in Iran.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mrs. Sadako Ogata, visited Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan in September. In Kabul on 20 September, accompanied by Mr. Sotirios Mousouris, she called on the President of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani, and held talks with senior government officials on the issue of refugees. A total of 1,614,200 refugees have been assisted by UNHCR to return from Pakistan since the establishment of the voluntary repatriation programme on 28 July 1990. Similarly, 317,923 refugees have been assisted to return from Iran since 1 December 1992.

From 14-20 September, Professor Felix Ermacora, the Special Rapporteur of the UN Commission on Human Rights, visited the region. He travelled to Kabul where he met with the President of Afghanistan, senior government officials and representatives of local community organizations. He also visited Herat.

Inter-Agency Humanitarian Programme in Iraq

On 13 September 1993, the Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and his Deputy in Geneva issued a letter of appeal calling on donors for the urgent funding of winter humanitarian needs (US \$57 million) for the provision of food, kerosene, essential drugs and medicines, agricultural inputs, electrical spare parts and security (UN Guards Contingent for Iraq - UNGCI).

An increase in security incidents affecting the programme has been reported in the past two months. These include direct attacks on NGO vehicles and staff, the bombing of a UN relief convoy (on 24/09/93), the shelling of villages by military forces (causing the displacement of hundreds of families) and attacks against UN vehicles and premises in the North).

On 22-23 September, Mr. G. Putman Cramer, Chief, DHA/SUI, travelled to Prague to interview 62 military/police officers who were pre-selected for enrolment with UNGCI, of whom 39 were assigned to Iraq on 13 October. By the end of October, the UN Guards Contingent (currently numbering 241 Guards) will be increased to 300 Guards with the deployment of 50 Thai Guards and regular UN/UN Security Officers from UN Offices.

In the field, UNGCI started training sessions of its personnel, covering *inter-alia* communications, driving and first aid. The UNGCI medical team, composed of four medical doctors and five medical assistants, is on call 24 hours per day and provides medical care also to UN and NGO personnel.

With the conversion of a number of international posts to national posts, to reduce administrative costs, the number of international staff assigned to the UN Humanitarian Programme has decreased somewhat. As of 1 October, 67 international and 224 local UN staff were assigned to the Humanitarian Programme in Iraq (excluding UNGCI). In addition, 138 international NGO staff were assigned to various humanitarian activities country-wide.

Food distribution during September covered approximately 284,000 beneficiaries in the north and 350,000 beneficiaries in the centre and south of the country. Although food target requirements should be met through December 1993 by announced or received contributions, additional donor support is necessary to cover needs for the last three months of the current phase (January - March 1994).

Planning for the provision of 120 million litres of kerosene for 550,000 families (200 litres per family) is complete and initial quantities have been received or are being delivered (approx. 20 million litres) under arrangements with the US Government. As of 30 September, total quantities of kerosene in storage in the three northern governorates amounted to 27 million litres. Furthermore, the UK-ODA has contributed USD 4.5 million to UNICEF for the purchase of kerosene, representing approximately 27.5 million litres.

The sustained power cut in the northern Governorate of Dohuk since 5 August 1993 is causing hardship for the population, especially with the approaching winter season. DHA's response to this situation was the allocation of US\$ 600,000 to UNICEF for the procurement of electrical spare parts and power generators. Additional funding has been earmarked for the provision of spare parts in the Mosul area. Also, the US Government is providing in-kind bilateral assistance (electric power generators) in the Dohuk area, in collaboration with DHA.

The health situation in the northern Governorates has worsened due to the severe shortage of vaccines and essential drugs, laboratory reagents and medical supplies during the past two months. UNICEF has delivered basic drugs, medical equipment, hepatitis vaccines, insulin, cancer and surgical drugs and IV fluids worth approximately US \$2.4 million. Primaquine tablets were also distributed. UNICEF provided training in support of the country-wide Control of Diarrhoeal Diseases campaign. Limited spraying for malaria control was undertaken in the north.

Water supply and sanitation problems remain most acute in the centre and south of the country. UNICEF delivered submersible pumps, relays, water pumps and sewer flushing hoses (worth US \$320,000) to Basrah Governorate, Mosul and

Baghdad. Spare parts, chlorinators, motors and other equipment (worth US \$900,000) are on order for the Hilla Water treatment Plant and for smaller plants in the centre and south. Oxfam continued construction of latrines, wells and spring protection for schools in the south. Various projects are under preparation for depressed areas in the northern governorates.

Education. School water and sanitation work continued (monitored by Oxfam/UNICEF) with 848 out of 1,050 systems fully rehabilitated in the south by the end of September. Education programmes are progressing in the north. A UNESCO consultant (building specialist) is in Iraq to supervise activities and will be joined shortly by two UNVs, who will be posted to northern Iraq and will be involved with repair of school facilities.

Integrated shelter and other NGO activities. A pilot integrated shelter project was begun by OXFAM in the Suleimaniyah Governorate. Other integrated shelter projects (shelter materials, agricultural inputs, schools, roads, water supply and education) were also under way in the north, directed by several other non-governmental organizations (mainly funded by the EEC). A HABITAT consultant is expected shortly to review unmet shelter needs for possible support. NGOs were also involved in water and sanitation projects and provision of food and medicines and support to the medical infrastructure in the north.

Increased convoy movements and delivery of relief supplies between 15 August and 30 September 1993, have consisted of 522 trucks delivering 6,953 mts. of shelter/construction materials, 284 mts. of water and sanitation equipment, 117 mts. of medical supplies, 139 mts. of agricultural materials and 278 mts. of miscellaneous supplies to Dohuk, Arbil and Suleimaniyah Governorates. This represents an average of 11 trucks per day.

In September 1993, the Turkish Government announced the launching of a US \$13.5 million assistance programme which, though initially focusing on the northern Governorates, would also provide assistance (during the second phase) to the central and southern areas of Iraq. Since 24 September, the first quantities and commodities delivered to the North were: wheat flour (mts. 1,256), rice (mts. 120), lentils (mts. 60), sugar (mts. 89), cooking oil (mts. 159), powdered milk (mts. 60), and drinking water equipment (mts. 20). This operation is conducted bilaterally, in co-ordination with DHA.

On the financial side, donor funding has increased substantially since July 1993 and, in addition to voluntary contributions, US \$21 million were allocated to the Programme from the UN Escrow Account. Total funds available to the UN Humanitarian Cooperation Programme amount to US \$95.8 million. In addition to contributions made to the UN Agencies/programmes, US \$61.6 million have been contributed (cash and in-kind) either unearmarked, provided directly to NGOs or in the form of bilateral programmes with the local authorities in the North.

Drought Emergency in Southern Africa (DESA)

The 1992-93 regional drought emergency placing more than 20 million people in Southern Africa at risk, is now over. However, in several countries such as Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland drought-reduced harvests are causing food insecurity. After consulting with the DHA Drought Emergency in Southern Africa Programme, the Governments of Lesotho and Namibia convened in-country meetings to communicate food aid needs through 1994.

As drought is a recurring phenomenon in the region, DHA is continuing its co-operation with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to try and identify ways in which the emergency response and drought management capacities of individual countries can be enhanced. DHA participated in the SADC Regional Drought Management Workshop held in Harare, Zimbabwe from 13 to 16 September. The Workshop followed the preparation of Drought Management Country Assessment papers for each of the SADC countries, except for Angola. The Workshop brought together the main players in the management of the recent emergency, giving them the opportunity to share their experiences and determine the most effective strategies for dealing with future drought.

As a follow up activity to the Meeting in Harare, a series of Drought Management Workshops are due to take place in each of the SADC countries later this year. The regional action agenda encompasses the urgent need to develop improved responses, increased preparedness and effective mitigation measures to counter the possible impact of both natural and man-made disasters. In the specific case of drought, as it is a «slow onset» disaster, DHA and SADC believe it should be possible for national governments to mitigate its impact. This being that they work with the support of the international community and that an emergency management capacity exists. The SADC initiative will complement activities undertaken or planned for countries of the region by DHA - UNDP Disaster Management Training Programme (DMTP).

ANGOLA: In response to the intensification of hostilities in Angola, the United Nations Humanitarian Assistance Co-ordination Unit (UCAH) has worked closely with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Angola (SRSG) to develop an Emergency Relief Plan (ERP). The strategy for the plan is two-fold: to deliver humanitarian relief goods to sites that have not been rendered inaccessible by the conflict and to continue negotiating with both the Government and UNITA for access to locations under siege. Despite a number of setbacks, including the shooting of a WFP plane and, in a separate incident, the killing of three WFP driver/assistants, the ERP is progressing. Since August, UCAH has been able to report significant monthly increases in tonnage of relief food delivered to beneficiaries.

The DHA DESA Programme has played an essential role in, *inter alia*, providing regular financial tracking reports on financial contributions to humanitarian assistance activities in Angola; assisting UCAH in resource mobilization; participating in inter-agency multi-sectoral review exercises to attain programme objectives and providing wide-ranging field support to UCAH on humanitarian matters.

MOZAMBIQUE: The UN Office for Humanitarian Assistance Co-ordination in Mozambique (UNOHAC) is a DHA co-ordination structure operating within the United Nations Operations in Mozambique (ONUMOZ). UNOHAC's activities are aimed at buttressing the role of humanitarian aid in promoting the process of national reconciliation and continued peace. Since mid-August, UNOHAC has been active in co-ordinating humanitarian assistance activities in Mozambique, focussing on the sectors of reintegration of refugees and the internally displaced; demobilization of soldiers; emergency relief (food aid); and restoration of essential services.

RWANDA: A DHA Emergency Unit is active in Rwanda assisting the Resident Co-ordinator in the regular assessment of emergency needs of displaced and returnee populations. This Unit promotes and facilitates the response of the United Nations system and its partners to the crisis, collects data and analyses and disseminates emergency information. Moreover, it reports, through DHA, to the international community on developments in this humanitarian crisis. Additionally, the Resident Co-ordinator is in the process of further strengthening the Emergency Unit in Rwanda in conjunction with DHA.

Special Emergency Programme for the Horn of Africa (SEPHA)

ERITREA: On 1st October, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Jan Eliasson, met with the President of Eritrea, Mr. Issais Afwerki, in New York. Their talks included discussions on the follow-up to the 6 July Pledging Conference for the Programme for Refugee Reintegration, and Rehabilitation of Resettlement Areas in Eritrea (PROFERI). Initiation of this programme had been delayed as the Government considered how to deal with what it felt were inadequate amounts of pledges for the rehabilitation phase (versus the refugee repatriation) components of the programme. However, the Government has now decided to undertake a pilot scheme which will repatriate a limited number of refugees, with a concentration of funds to one or two specific areas.

Initial reports indicate that Eritrea may well face a substantial food deficit in 1994. Due to widespread failure of

the rains during August and September, as well as major pest infestations, the present crop is gravely insufficient. Sizable food aid donations will be intensely needed.

SUDAN: On 28 September, an Informal Consultation on Emergency Priority Needs in Sudan was held in Geneva. At this time, UN agencies identified US \$105 million in urgent funding requirements. Of this amount, US \$67.3 million represented requests for 1993 funding while the remaining US \$37.4 million represented WFP's projected requirements for January to March 1994.

At the Informal Consultation, donor representatives reiterated their concern over the high cost of humanitarian relief operations in Sudan. There is conflict, not only between the Government of Sudan and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), but also between SPLA factions themselves. Donors emphasized the need to lessen reliance on air transportation and, wherever possible, utilize more cost-effective means of delivery based on road, river and rail systems. They also stressed the importance of implementing emergency rehabilitation programmes designed to increase household food security and communities' coping capacity. Participants also expressed the view that the only real solution to the suffering in Sudan is a cessation of hostilities.

As of 1 October, pledges toward the 1993 SEPHA Appeal for Sudan amounted to US \$106.6 million as compared with US \$204 million for all of 1992.

FORMER YUGOSLAVIA: Through monthly updates the Inter-Agency Support Unit (IASU) has continued to report on the flow of contributions to UN agencies for humanitarian operations in this region. As there is no established special programme for the 6 Republics, the staff of IASU, itself, has provided direct support to UNHCR and other agencies by guiding the Consolidated Appeal Process, as well as strengthening programming ties between agencies. A programming exercise was initiated in August in the former Yugoslavia. This culminated in an inter-agency mission and the launch of a new consolidated appeal done simultaneously on 8 October by UNHCR and DHA in Geneva and New York. The appeal covers the January to June 1994 period, and amounts to US \$522,000,000 for a beneficiary population of 4,260,000. IASU is now organizing a system-wide review of the operations, with the goal of drafting a document in which a common approach can be devised. In New York, support is given to the Secretary-General's office for Policy Guidance, and to the Sanctions Committee for Humanitarian Issues.

Newly Independent States

Following recommendations of the Inter-Agency Task Force on the NIS and after those recommendations were reviewed favourably by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee

Working Group (IASC), it has been decided to establish a Special Emergency Programme for the NIS within DHA-Geneva. The Task Force continues to facilitate inter-agency co-ordination and had met for the 18th time on 19 October 1993.

One of the major concerns to the Inter-Agency Task Force is the follow-up to the Consolidated Inter-agency Appeal for the four NIS countries and the lack of donor response to these appeals. Follow-up to this appeal will continue.

Inter-Agency Support Unit (IASU)

BACKGROUND: IASU performs a secretarial function to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). The Inter-Agency Standing Committee establishes responsibilities for prompt and co-ordinated action in the event of an emergency anywhere in the world. The members of the IASC include inter-governmental as well as non-governmental organisations and agencies.

A "working level" committee known as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Working Group (IASC-WG) consists of the same organisations represented in the IASC. The IASC-WG determines priority issues, emergencies and activities that require the attention and policy decisions of the IASC; makes decisions on operational issues that fall within the IASC-WG's competence; and draws the attention of the Inter-Agency Support Unit those priority issues that require follow-up.

IASC-WG IN GENEVA: The Inter-Agency Standing Committee Working Group met on 15 October 1993. The agenda of the meeting included discussions of Humanitarian Mandates in Conflict Situations Involving Peacekeeping; follow-up to the agreed conclusions of the ECOSOC and discussion on forthcoming deliberations of the General Assembly; terms of Reference of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Structure; and Consolidated Appeal Process.

CONSOLIDATED APPEAL PROCESS: The Consolidated Appeal Process is a concept which should serve to coordinate the response of various actors involved in meeting emergency needs throughout the course of an emergency by focusing on priority actions and those in need of humanitarian assistance; promoting cost effective and efficient relief and recovery activities while avoiding duplication; promoting closer collaboration between humanitarian assistance organisations; and to provide an appeal through which UN agencies mobilise resources for programmes to meet the needs of the people affected by complex emergencies.

Three Inter-Agency Task Force meetings have been held to

discuss the Consolidated Appeal Process and the latest draft was presented at the 15 October meeting of the IASC-WG.

FIELD CO-ORDINATION: There is a proposal to establish a working group on Field Co-ordination in Exceptional Circumstances. This proposal will be discussed at the next IASC-WG meeting and if accepted, the working group will hold its first meeting in December, with the full support of IASU.

COMPLEX EMERGENCY DEFINITION: A final draft of the Definition of a Complex Emergency, pending comments from the IASC-WG will be prepared by the beginning of December.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPS): The Inter-Agency Task Force on IDPs will convene in December to finalise the proposed Terms of Reference for the IASC-agreed study on IDPs in the Context of UN Agency Mandates. It is also recommended that a working group is formed with three agency representatives which will work on the draft of the study to be presented to the Task Force in early January.

Disaster Mitigation and Reduction

MERGER OF DMB AND IDNDR SECRETARIAT: *The merger of the Disaster Mitigation Branch (DMB) and the IDNDR Secretariat was announced by the Under-Secretary-General on 20 September 1993. This consolidation has now been final and will enable DHA to better utilize limited staff and financial resources in addressing issues relating to disaster reduction and mitigation. The remaining components of DMB are expected to be relocated to the Petit-Saconnex Annex within the next few weeks, making for effective management of the new service headed by Dr. Olavi Elo.*

ARGENTINA - DHA DISASTER MITIGATION PROGRAMME: A DHA staff member visited Argentina in September 1993 to launch the «DHA Disaster Mitigation Programme in Argentina». This new project consists of two sub-programmes in volcanic and industrial risk mitigation. The main objective of this programme is to strengthen the country's capability and to build up its self-reliance in coping with emergencies of this kind.

The pilot project which started on 1 October 1993, is funded by the Swiss Disaster Relief Unit (SDRU) through DHA.

ECUADOR - FLOOD RISKS RESULTING FROM LANDSLIDE: DHA and the Swiss Disaster Relief Unit have now completed a technical report (Spanish version) on emergency management missions to the site of the «Josefina» landslide which occurred in the Paute river valley, Cuenca, Ecuador, on 29 March 1993. The report focusses on the engineering options and specific measures taken for draining the water which backed up to a depth of nearly 80 metres behind the natural dam, causing serious flooding in the river valley upstream. These measures succeeded in cutting a channel through the landslide to allow the lake to drain at a controlled rate without excessive erosion of the dam, which might have caused new floods downstream. Details regarding the mathematical modelling of and scenarios for the dam erosion are given in the report.

This case study presents valuable guidance to other countries where such events can be expected.

A shortened English version of the report has been prepared and will soon be available.

LATIN AMERICA - DHA NOMINATES ITS DISASTER MITIGATION REGIONAL TECHNICAL ADVISER: DHA has nominated a Regional Field Specialist for Latin America, effective as of 1 September 1993. This Office, based in Quito, Ecuador, has been set up at the request of various governments, especially those of the Andean subregion, for an expansion of natural disaster mitigation activities as an indispensable element to protect social and economic development. This new DHA initiative has received financial support from the Government of Switzerland.

The main functions of the DHA Regional Technical Adviser are:

- to assist in the co-ordination of the on-going DHA Disaster Mitigation programmes, particularly in Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, including the provision of direct support and regular evaluation;
- to promote new disaster mitigation initiatives or the extension of existing programmes as appropriate to other countries of the Latin American Region;
- to assist with the promotion of IDNDR-related activities in the Latin American Region. This involves advisory assistance to create National IDNDR Committees, and to strengthen the existing ones.
- to participate in the assessment of damage and unmet needs in the aftermath of major disasters in Latin America, and in lesson-learning exercises as input to future mitigation activities;
- to assist with the organization of seminars or workshops on disaster mitigation and management in the region.

This nomination is part of DHA's strategy to further the goals of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction by assisting individual countries in developing mitigation programmes. It also aims at strengthening regional co-operation on issues related to disaster reduction through the exchange of experiences between the countries of the region.

WORLD CONFERENCE ON NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION: The preparatory activities continued for the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction scheduled for Yokohama, Japan 23-27 May 1994. A series of meetings were conducted in September with representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Local Organizing Committee, Preparatory Group and Secretariat staff to review progress and discuss activities, Programme of Work, Logistics and other matters relating to the World Conference. Approximately 1,000 are expected to attend this meeting which will be conducted as the inaugural event in the National Auditorium in Yokohama. Governments, National IDNDR Committees, scientists and technical experts, along with representatives from the private sector, NGOs and other groups are planning to attend. UN Agency involvement is extensive and an Inter-Agency Working Group meeting occurred during the time of the Japanese visit. Key meeting planners had the opportunity to exchange information important to development of the programme.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION/IDNDR MEETING OF NATIONAL COMMITTEES: The Director participated in a meeting in Brussels organized by the IDNDR/ Scientific and Technical Committee (European members) and hosted by the European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO). Attendees included IDNDR National Committee representatives from EC - countries and observers from Russian EMERCOM and NATO, as well as from several EC Directorates General. The purpose of the meeting was to better co-ordinate IDNDR issues and clarify linkages with the European Community and developing countries. Significant progress was made in this regard, including probable establishment of regular EC/ECHO - IDNDR meeting for exchange of information and experience.

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF SCIENTIFIC UNIONS: The Director was an invited speaker at the General Assembly in Santiago, Chile. This meeting represented one of the largest gatherings of the scientific and technical community, important partners in the IDNDR programme, and provided a platform for current IDNDR/DHA issues presentation.

SWISS NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF NATIONAL ENGINEERING ASSOCIATIONS (LAUSANNE 29-30 SEPTEMBER 1993): The Symposium was organized as a contribution of European Engineers Federation (FEANI) to

the reduction of natural disasters, in collaboration with the Swiss Society of Engineers and Architects (SIA) and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology. Dr. Elo participated in the opening session of the symposium which was set up to acknowledge the IDNDR by creating an opportunity for European engineers to exchange ideas on the topic of disaster prevention and reduction. The scientific programme was divided into four sessions: «The IDNDR Aims and World-Wide Co-ordination of Prevention of Natural Disasters», «Safeguarding of Vital Engineering Systems»; «Hazards and Risks Assessment in Europe»; «Transfer of Technology».

More information on Disaster Mitigation Activities is available in «Stop Disasters», IDNDR Secretariat, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10 - Switzerland.

Information Management

7e Mondial de la Publicité Francophone : Vers une éthique pour la Communication Humanitaire

Réunis les 7 et 8 octobre 1993 à l'Office des Nations Unies à Genève sous la bannière de l'association *Mondial de la Publicité Francophone*, des professionnels du marketing provenant de pays francophones du monde entier ont examiné, en compagnie de représentants d'organisations humanitaires, l'impact et les conséquences de la communication (publicité, relations publiques, marketing direct) sur l'action humanitaire menée sur le terrain.

Le thème de la communication humanitaire, choisi pour les conférences du *Mondial de la Publicité Francophone 1993*, a permis pour la première fois de réunir deux logiques, celle de la communication et celle de l'humanitaire, afin de débattre les problèmes de la surmédiatisation et de la dérive de l'information dans le domaine de l'humanitaire.

A cet effet, des orateurs prestigieux comme Cornelio Sommaruga, Président du Comité International de la Croix Rouge et Rony Braumann, Président de Médecins sans frontières, pour n'en citer que quelques uns, ont indiqué que les médias ainsi que les communicateurs avaient une part de responsabilité importante au niveau de la retransmission de l'information car ils prévenaient que le sensationnalisme était contre-productif pour l'aide aux victimes sur le terrain. Pour sa

part, le Département des Affaires Humanitaires des Nations Unies, représenté par Philippe Boullé, rappelait que l'essentiel était de sauver des vies humaines tout en responsabilisant l'opinion publique de manière éthique.

Après un tour d'horizon des outils utilisés pour soutenir l'action humanitaire, notamment la promotion et le marketing direct, la publicité, les relations publiques et les relations avec les médias, une sélection de campagnes de communication ont été examinées. Les conférences de clôture, mettant l'accent sur les limites de la communication humanitaire, ont permis de mettre en relief les techniques qui fonctionnent.

Le bilan positif de ce forum, mesuré par l'intérêt porté à la question de la communication humanitaire et par le nombre important de participants concernés par ce sujet, témoignait de la nécessité de poursuivre ce débat pour mieux harmoniser le travail des communicateurs et celui des humanitaires. Cette conférence se verra donc, vraisemblablement, succéder par une deuxième édition. ■

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MOBILE SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS, PARIS, 11-14 OCTOBER: A DHA staff member participated as speaker and panelist on the use of satellite telecommunications in emergency situations. Further discussed were legal and political issues concerning the transborder use of land-mobile satellite terminals. New equipment and services were evaluated with regard to the increasing use of satellite communications for the co-ordination of relief operations and for the safety of personnel in the field, as well as a reduction of related costs.

DHA'S NEW CONCEPT FOR EMERGENCY TELECOMMUNICATIONS AT AND WITH DISASTER SITES, was tested during "Exercise '93" in Austria, and was fully applied in Georgia for the first time in October. (see article Exercise 93, page 39). The DHA team used its own satellite terminals, type A and C, for international voice, telefax, telex and data communications and HF transceivers, as well as the specially developed VHF field kits for local and regional links, providing communications for all partners in the relief effort. Donor contributions enabled DHA to acquire the additional equipment required for this demanding task, while maintaining the response capability of the UNDAC and OSOCC concepts.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS: Thanks to a contribution from the Government of the United Kingdom, DHA purchased a second Inmarsat A mobile satellite terminal. This has increased DHA's capacity to take speedy action in newly developing emergency situations in countries where communications are difficult or disrupted. An UNDAC reconnaissance team that may be fielded immediately to the disaster site will thus be equipped with independent voice and facsimile communications capacity.

UNIENET Corner

New facilities on UNIENET:

DHA has been disseminating Emergency Situation Reports via an automated Listserver (mailing list service) since October 1993. This was made possible thanks to the co-operation of Simon Fraser University of Canada. Internet and Bitnet users can subscribe to this automated service.

Subscriptions and cancellations are handled directly by sending specific commands to the following address:

Listserv@disaster.cprost.sfu.ca

To obtain the list of commands recognized by the listserver, send the command:

Information dha-sitreps

DHA Information Reports and Consolidated Appeals: In addition to the fax and e-mail distribution, these monthly reports are now made available on-line on DHA Bulletin Boards Menu (option 5).

DHA Directory of International Search and Rescue Teams is also on-line: Disaster Emergency Contacts database Menu (option 5).

New Users:

We welcome the following new users: Innovative Emergency Management - USA (UNX118), Harold D. Foster - Dept of Geography University of Victoria, Canada (UNX128), Defensa Civil - Atención Inmediata - Venezuela (UNX129), National Center for Earthquake Engineering Research, USA (UNX135), Care Inc. Atlanta, USA (UNX142).

Reminder:

To join any mailing distribution list, contact DHA Geneva, mailbox DIALCOM 141:DHAGVA or Internet DHAGVA@cgnet.com.

Should you need more information on UNIENET, please do not hesitate to contact your Network System Manager

DHA - Geneva, Dialcom 141:UNX002, Internet UNX002@cgnet.com

Disaster Management Training Programme

Country Workshops

The **China Country Workshop** was attended by the Secretary General of the State Council (China's highest policy-making body) and the Ministry of Civil Affairs, as well as by several vice-ministers, senior officials from ministries and disaster-prone provinces, natural disaster experts involved with the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR), national officers of UN agencies and representatives of the international community. Four prominent disaster types were identified - namely, drought, earthquake, floods and typhoons.

Two main recommendations of the workshop were to establish a state centre on natural disaster reduction which could act as the clearing house for information on natural disasters and to meet again in two years time in order to evaluate progress made.

The workshop was preceded by the China International Disaster Management Conference (CIDMC), an event involving heads of 33 state ministries, heads of UN agencies and representatives from the international donor community. Dr. Elo of the IDNDR Secretariat participated; subsequently, he and Mr. Holcombe, the UNDP Resident Representative, were received by Vice-Premier Minister Zhu Rongji.

At the time of the **Country Workshop for India** serious flooding had occurred in the north and also threatened other parts of the country thus seriously reducing the participation of government officers who, in almost all cases, were the responsible officers in their states. Nevertheless, the workshop was opened by one of India's most senior civil servants, the Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and the final session was addressed by the Central Government Relief Commissioner. In spite of these unforeseen events, the workshop led to an enhanced awareness and more developed understanding of the issues, with definite linkages to possibilities of application in the field.

UN-cadre trainers from DHA facilitated sessions in the **Country Workshops in Indonesia*** and **Viet Nam**; the Jordan country workshop has just been completed; and preparations are complete for country workshops in **Djibouti** and **Nepal** (scheduled during October-November).

As a result of the Donors Meetings in Geneva and New York (17 and 21 June, respectively) pledges of financial support were made by the Governments of Germany, Sweden and Switzerland: a contribution from Sweden has since been received.

Translation of training materials continues; several of the Modules and Trainer's Guides are now available in the different language versions - namely English, French, Spanish and Arabic.

***INDONESIA: Disaster Management Training Programme (DMTP) Country Workshop:** A DHA Relief Co-ordination officer participated as cadre trainer in the DMTP country workshop in Indonesia. The workshop was divided into a national and international section. About 50 Indonesian participants - government officials from central, provincial and district level, civil defense and military personnel, Red Cross and NGOs discussed disaster management issues, centering on the response to the Flores earthquake and tsunami which hit Indonesia in December 1992. They were, then, joined by representatives of the international community in Indonesia consisting of many UN organizations, NGOs and institutes of higher learning. With efficient organization by the National Coordinating Board on Disaster Management and the UNDP office in Jakarta, a number of recommendations to strengthen disaster management in Indonesia were adopted. Further highlighted was the need to incorporate disaster mitigation strategies more systematically into development planning.

Documentation

Latest publications published by DHA

- Strategic Aspects of Geological and Seismic Disaster Management and Disaster Scenario Planning. *Selected Presentations made at training seminars in Moscow, Alma-Ata, and Frunze (October 1990 and 1991).*
- Landslide *La Josefina* on the Paute River, Cuenca, Ecuador. Report on Disaster Management.
- Case Report: Floods in the Islamic Republic of Iran (February/March/April 1993).
- India Earthquake - 29 September 1993.

Press Releases issued during September/October 1993

- ND/378 First Development of DHA-developed UNDAC stand-by team to coordinate international relief teams at simulated earthquake in Austria.
- ND/379 Department of Humanitarian Affairs stand-by team assists victims of earthquake in India.
- ND/380 Vols d'urgence du Département des affaires humanitaires à destination de la Géorgie.
- ND/381 DHA information meeting on Maharashtra earthquake, India.

Press Releases Issued by DHA are available through UNIENET or upon request at the Information and Publications Unit, Geneva Office.

Situation Reports

The Special Emergency Programmes for Southern Africa, the Horn of Africa and the NIS are now distributing situation reports by electronic mail. The countries reported on are *Angola, Azerbaijan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, and Tajikistan*. The first of these reports were distributed in early September on Tajikistan and Azerbaijan.

If you wish to receive copies of these monthly reports, please contact the Department of Humanitarian Affairs - Geneva Office by email DHAGVA@cgnat.com or by fax at (41 22) 917 0023, Department of Humanitarian Affairs, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland. ■

Conferences

IDNDR - World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction A "Safer World for the 21st Century" Yokohama, 23 - 27 May 1994

World Conference to Address Natural Disasters in 1994

Each year, thousands of people are killed and billions of dollars are lost due to earthquakes, floods, drought, cyclones, landslides and other natural disasters. Each decade since the 1950s, deaths due to disasters have risen by an average of 50 per cent. In 1992 alone, the economic loss from disasters was at least US \$60 billion. Disaster research has shown that disasters can be successfully prevented and prepared for. Yet the dramatic losses due to natural disasters attest that we can do much more to apply existing knowledge to make people safe - or safer - from natural disasters.

To address these issues, a World Conference on Natural Disasters will be held from 23-27 May 1994 in Yokohama, Japan. Organized by the UN International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR, 1990-2000) and hosted by the Government of Japan, the Conference will gather policy makers and practitioners with an interest in limiting the devastating impact that disasters have on the environment and socio-economic development.

The conference aims to: review national, regional and international progress for disaster reduction; chart an action programme for the future; exchange information on the implementation of disaster reduction programmes and policies; increase awareness of the importance of disaster reduction policies.

The results of the Conference will contribute to the 1994 UN Economic and Social Council review of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, as required by the UN General Assembly. Just as important, the Conference serves as a catalyst for concerted, international action to reduce the impact of disasters.

Linking Disasters and Development

What are the links between disasters and development? How can disaster mitigation policies address concerns about environmental degradation, mass movement of people, stagnant economic growth, poverty or poorly regulated industrialization? What is the most effective way to make disaster mitigation policy part of sustainable development? What is the role of disaster reduction in relief operations?

National delegations will address their approaches to these issues in a plenary sessions of the conference. Major regional organizations will discuss their approaches in a second plenary

session. A third plenary session will provide an overview of disaster management to sustainable development, focusing on the links between the public sector, the private sector and volunteer organizations.

The International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction has spurred a wide range of organizations to organize and sponsor sessions to address major public policy and macroeconomic issues related to disaster mitigation. Specific sessions at the World Conference will be dedicated to *vulnerable communities* (International Federation of the Red Cross, UNICEF), *economic aspects of disaster reduction for sustainable development* (World Bank and the US Natural Research Council), *the relation between technological and natural hazards* (United Nations Environmental Programme), *drought management* (Food and Agriculture Organization), *warning systems for disasters* (World Meteorological Organization), *the effect of disasters on modern societies* (UN

Centre for Regional Development) and *construction that is resistant to natural hazards* (International Council for Scientific Unions and the World Federation of Engineering Organizations).

The conference will bring together the major decision makers from around the world who can make disaster reduction a reality - national government ministers, UN agency officials, representatives of non-governmental organizations, business leaders, regional and development bank officials, leading scientists and engineers and many others. IDNDR extends an invitation to all those involved in disaster reduction activities, including those in planning, finance, foreign affairs, health, science, engineering, civil defence, industry, insurance, the media and emergency management.

For more information, contact: DHA, International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva. Fax.: (4122) 7338695.

Inter-American Conference on National Experiences in Disaster Reduction 21 - 24 March 1994 - Santa Fé - Colombia

This Conference, to be held in Cartagena, Colombia, from 21 - 24 March 1994, provides an opportunity for the exchange of national experiences in disaster reduction, within the framework of the IDNDR.

During the first day, national disaster authorities will describe their programmes. The next two days will focus on specific aspects of disaster management, with parallel sessions on technical, training and information, operational and

organizational issues. The fourth morning will be reserved for plenary reporting and general conclusions.

The official language of the Conference is Spanish. Single page abstracts of papers to be submitted should be sent as soon as possible to: J.M. Uribe R., Asesor, Dirección Nacional para la Prevención y Atención de Desastres, Calle 26 13-19 Piso 26, Santa Fé de Bogotá, D.C. Colombia, Phone.: (0057-1) 283.49.66 - Fax.: (0057-1) 286.04.85.

Book Review

Populations en danger (Médecins sans frontières) Ouvrage rédigé sous la direction de François Jean - Collection Plurier, série Intervention, Hachette, Paris, 1992.

Un livre blanc sur les dix situations qui sont apparues, dans l'optique de MSF, comme les plus graves au cours de l'année 1992. A travers cet ouvrage de plus de 200 pages, MSF a voulu attirer l'attention de l'opinion publique sur le drame des populations victimes des effets, souvent conjugués, de la guerre, de la sécheresse, des épidémies, de la famine et de la répression. Devant les fortunes médiatiques diverses réservées à ces dix populations, MSF a souhaité, en particulier, rappeler la tragédie silencieuse des populations du Soudan et du Myanmar, ainsi que celles des millions de réfugiés et déplacés, auxquels les organisations humanitaires n'ont pas toujours accès.

Populations in Danger (English translation)

MSF - Edited by François Jean -

Published by John Libbey & Company, London, 1992.

A white book on ten situations which in MSF's view, appeared as the more serious ones in the course of 1992. In this report, MSF intended to draw attention of the general public to the tragedy of entire populations affected by war, drought, epidemic, famine or repression, if not all of these. Notwithstanding the attention given by the media to these ten populations, MSF wishes, in particular, to remind the public opinion of the tragedies being played out in Sudan and Myanmar as well as of the plight of millions of refugees and displaced persons to whom aid agencies do not always have access.